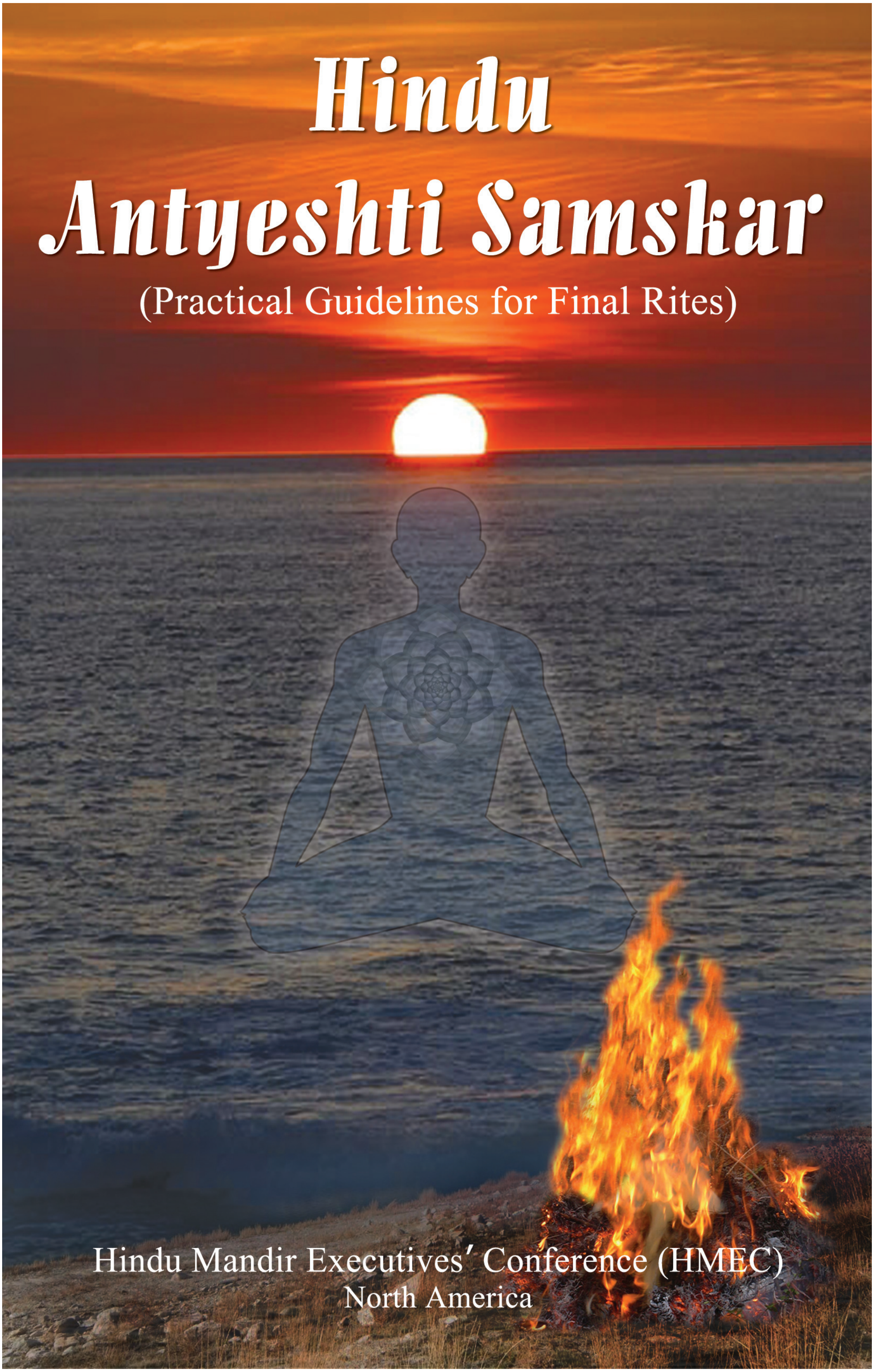
Hindu Antyeshti Samskar

(Practical Guidelines for Final Rites)



Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC)
North America

Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC) is an annual initiative seeking development of network between the executives of all Hindu mandirs of America. Mandir executives are the natural leaders of the Hindu society by virtue of their intense motivation, deep experience, and selfless service. They understand Hindu-American needs and challenges.

At HMEC these executives deliberate on ways of ensuring the sustenance of Hindu Dharma in North America. A key component to this deliberation is to explore ways of anchoring Hindu Dharma's sanaatan values in the hearts of coming generations and roles which mandirs can play to make that happen. The Conference is also a place where experts offer wisdom in specific areas, for everyone else's benefit. The conferees explore avenues of expanding mandirs' roles to meet the ever changing needs of the North American Hindu.

This publication, **Hindu Antyeshti Samskar (Practical Guidelines for Final Rites) for North America,** has been made possible by the Antyeshti Samskar Committee of Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference, USA.

Hindu Antyeshti Samskar

(Practical Guidelines for Final Rites)

Compiled by
Antyeshti Samskar Committee,
Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC)
North America

Hindu Antyeshti Samskar

(Practical Guidelines for Final Rites) for North America
Published Date: June 2009

Author: Antyeshti Samskar Committee

Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference, USA

First Edition, 2009

ISBN-13: 978-0-9793501-2-2
ISBN-10: 0-9793501-2-3

Price: US $12.00

Published by:
Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Inc.
P.O. Box 441505
Houston, TX 77244-1505
http://www.vhp-america.org/
Phone: 732-744-0851

For mail order:
Write to above address or Email:
bookstore@vhp-america.org

Foreword

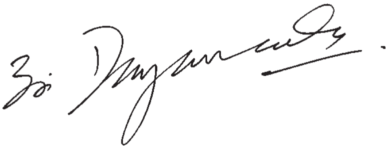
The one who indwells a given live body is called *jéva*. When the body dies the *jéva* in a subtle form of the same body, like the thought-body one assumes in dream, departs the body. This is called *preta-sharéram*. In order to release the *jéva* from this *preta-sharéram* and go forward and take a new birth in a better, pleasant and spiritual environment, Hindus perform certain rites. These last rites are called *antyeshti,* performed by the departed person's son, or any intimately connected person following the prescribed instructions.

The Hindus living away from Bharat have continued to observe their religious ceremonies including *antyeshti* rites regardless of where they live. While there are many temples and other institutions to help Hindus observe the *samskäras* and *püjäs*, they do not have appropriate and timely guidance to perform these rites. Since the rites cannot be done within the compounds of a temple, the cremation ceremonies are, more often than not, always compromised.

Now, the Hindu Mandir Executive Conference is bringing out a book on this important *antyeshti* rites for the benefit of the Hindus living in USA and also in other countries, giving detailed information about the rites and instructions on the performance of them.

This book can be officially released in the next conference of Hindu Mandir Executive Council and made available at all the Hindu institutions. This information is to be made known to the Hindu community in North America and elsewhere.

I thank the people who are involved in this project.



Swami Dayananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam
P.O.Box 1059, Saylorsburg, PA - 18353

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः गीता २-२३

Nainam cchindanti shastraani
Nainam dahati paavakah;
Na chainam kledayantyaapo
Na shoshayati maarutah **Gita(2-23)**

The Atman (soul) can never be cut to pieces by weapon, nor burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor dried by the wind.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mount Kailash



HMEC Publication Team:

Kumar Dave, Hindu Temple of Central Indiana, IN
Pandit G. Krishnamachar, Ashburn, VA
Vittal Venkataraman, Durga Temple, VA
Bhargav Desai, Mangal Mandir, MD
Rajni Shah, Publisher, Desh-Videsh Magazine
Abhaya Asthana, Gen Secretary, VHPA
Pandit Suresh Joshi, Hindu Jain Temple, Monroeville, PA
Sanjay Mehta, Hindu Jain Temple, Monroeville, PA
Pandita Indrani, Trinidad

1 INTRODUCTION

***"Om Suryam te Chakshurgacchatu Vatamaatmaa
Dyaam Cha Gachchha Prithivim Cha Dharmana /
Apo Va Gachchha Yadi Tatra Te Hitamoshadhishu
Pratimtishtha Sharirai svaha."***

O Jiva (Soul)! After thy death, (may all the components of thy body be merged into the five elements). May the power of thy sight be absorbed in the sun and thy breath be absorbed in the air (atmosphere). May thy other parts be absorbed in appropriate elements. And in accordance with the meritorious deeds thou hast performed here, may thy spirit dwell in the appropriate body.

- The Rigveda

In Vedic tradition, important life events are marked by religious ceremonies called samskaras[1]. The final samskara after death is antyeshti – final *yagya* (sacrifice), when the body itself is offered to the *Agni (*fire*)*. This is the final purificatory rite for the gross body that reduces it to the five basic elements from which it was formed. It reduces the bonds between the subtle body and the gross body.

The antyeshti ceremonies address both the deceased and the bereaved family. The ceremonies are based on the Vedic vision of the individual and his relationship with Ishwara. The life of a Hindu is a spiritual one and his culture religious. For a person who lived a spiritual life, dealing with death becomes an uplifting one. It makes it possible for one to cope with the difficult experience and come out of it as a more sensitive and mature individual.

From birth to death, his life is lived with appreciation of oneness with Ishvara. Moreover, the entire universe is seen as a manifestation of Ishvara and thus non-separate from him. A Hindu's life is guided by an understanding of the universal order of *Dharma and Adharma* and the laws of *Karma*. For a Hindu, a person's existence does not begin with birth and terminate with death of the physical body. There is an indweller called *prani or jiva* who manifests in a given body in

[1]Samskara is defined in Sanskrit as: Samyak kriyate yena karmana iti samskarah. It is an action by which one is refined and made a qualified recipient for performing a particular activity or for obtaining a specific result. The word antya means final and ishti means ritual. Thus antyeshti is the final ritual in the lifetime of a Hindu.

order to experience the results of its previous karmas. When a given physical body has served its purpose, it deteriorates and is unable to sustain life; the jiva gives up its current form to assume another more suitable one to continue its experiences based on the results of prior karmas.

The jiva assumes a subtle body after death of the physical body. This subtle form is known as *preta*. The preta is a transitory form that exists for a period of time in which the deceased maintains some connection with the world he has known. The bereaved family also maintains a connection with the deceased during that period. They do this through ceremonies associated with the cremation and the mourning period of thirteen days. The ceremonies provide a form to the sentiments that are both known and unknown. In this manner, the ceremonies help the process of separation for both the deceased and the family by reminding them that the earthly time for the departed is over and his connections with the world have come to an end. He needs to continue and move on in accordance with his karmas.

1.1 The Basic Steps

In the Antyeshti ceremony, the body's five basic components - known as panch bhutas - *prithvi* (earth), *jal* (water), *tej* (fire), *vAyu* (wind) and *akash* (space) are returned to the universe, thus maintaining the cosmic equilibrium. The son takes the *srauta agni* to the cremation ground. The cremation ground is purified. As the fire is lit, *Mantras* are recited for the various limbs to go back to the corresponding total deities – the eyes will go back to the Surya devata, the ears will go back to the directional deities.

An elaborate rite lasting thirteen days is performed. Some Hindus recite verses from the Garuda Purana with a prayer to devatas to guide the departed jiva to reach the proper destination. As soon as the atman leaves the body, it adopts another intangible, subtle body whose limbs grow day by day. On the tenth day after death, this 'interim' body grows completely. The son of the deceased offers the pindas – (food balls, made from cooked rice and water) – for the development of the limbs that the departed jiva will get in his next life. According to the scriptures, up to the tenth day, the deceased

continues his relation with this world and is termed *preta*, which means one who has departed, but who has not yet reached the other world.

Rites are performed for ten days after cremation, to develop various organs. For example, the first day is for the development of body, head, the second day for sense organs, brain, etc. On the tenth day, the deceased loses its preta status.

On the 11th day, prayer for the well being of the jiva in the next janma is performed. Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Yama are invoked, with Vishnu as the special witness. In their presence, the deceased is offered pindas. The term pinda symbolizes Shareeram – which is merged with the ancestors. If the person has done punya himself or herself, he/she will attain good janma; if not, the rituals are supposed to enable getting one.

On the 12th day, the jiva joins the pitr loka - sapindikaranam - where he then resides with his forefathers. As soon as he reaches the other world, he is released from his preta body. The relatives offer thal (food) to Bhagwan in the local mandir to repay *pitru* (ancestral) debt.

The Figure 1 below shows the basic steps involved in the process. Prior to death, the individual must prepare himself or herself mentally. The thirteen days following the death are faced by the family with assistance from the priest. After the thirteen day bereavement period, the family still requires support from the community. Finally, the family is responsible for performing the annual Shraadha ceremony as a mark of remembering and respecting the ancestors.

1.2 From Death to Cremation

Om krtva tu puskaram karma janata vapyajanatam
Mrtyuh kalavasam prapya naram pancatvamagatam
Dharmaadharma samayuktam lobhamohasamavrtam
Deheyam sarvagotrani divyan lokan sa gacchatu

Having performed known and unknown actions for attaining properity; having gained timely death and resolved the physical body into the five elements; having concluded a life of desires and performed Dharma and Adharma, may you proceed to your next abode.

The following table summarizes the antyeshti steps involved from the time of death until the cremation is completed.

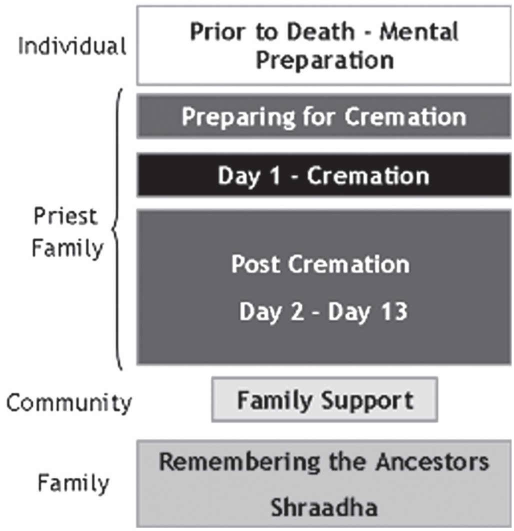


Figure 1 - The Anyeshti Samskara, Pre and Post Steps

Table 1 - Steps from Death to Cremation

Preparing the Body	Bathing, sprinkling the body with water. Chandanam, kumkum, vibhuti are placed and the body is covered with new clothes. Fresh flowers, Ganga Jal, Tulsi are offered. The body is placed on a frame made of bamboo sticks and laid to rest with head facing south.
Abhisinchanam **Speaking the Mantra in the Ear**	Mantras are chanted in the right ear of the deceased, symbolically reminding the departed jiva that an individual's life span, the life breath, prana, senses, mind, organs of action, earth, the universe and Ishwara are all interconnected. The idea in this

	message is that the jiva is not an isolated entity in the creation but has been an integral part of an infinite universe and continues to be so even after death of the physical body.
Karna-mantra	A ritual fire is kindled in which Agni is invoked. The final agnihotra is also performed at this time.
The ritual fire Pretagnisandhanam	This is performed if the death occurred at a time considered inauspicious.
Prayaschitta Karma **Journey to the Cremation Ground**	The family and friends carry the body in a procession to the cremation site. The one who leads carries in a clay pot the ritual fire that has been kindled by the domestic fire which has been maintained by the departed during his lifetime. It is befitting that a person who maintained the agnihotra fire throughout his married life in order to perform daily karmas be cremated from the same sacred fire. The people chant Yama sukta or chant Jai Sri Ram, or Ram nam satya hai.
Purifying the Body Ekoddistasraddha	This is a shraddha done to invoke the departed to make the body qualified to be an offering to Agni.
The Five Offerings **Panca-pindadanam**	Offering are made to various presiding deities and ancestors. These are done five times to seek the blessings of various deities and thereby remove obstacles in the jiva's journey. They are done by offering rice balls (pindas): 1) at the site where death occurred to the vastu devata, 2) at the doorway to the

	gruha devata, 3) during the procession at the crossroad or site of rest, to the bhuta-yonis and devataas to remove obstacles to the birth of the next form namely preta, 4) at the site of cremation to sanctify the ground, 5) at the time of collection of ashes.
Purifying the Site **Stalashuddhi**	The site where the body is to be cremated is sanctified by mantras and water. The body is also sanctified. Agnideva is invoked in the pyre. Ghee is offered and then lighted by the eldest son. The son goes around the pyre three times before lighting it.
Cremation Dahana - Samskarah	The cremation of body is not merely a means of disposal of the corpse. It is returning of the body to the elements from which it was born. It is symbolically offered back to the infinite Ishwara who is non-separate from the manifest universe. After the body of the deceased is placed on the pyre, the final ceremonies associated with cremation are performed. They include purification of the cremation site and the body, and invocation of Ishwara. Ghee is poured on the pyre as an offering to Agni.
The Journey Back Home	After cremation of the body the family and friends leave the cremation ground and take a bath before returning home. At this time the members of the immediate family offer water oblations to the departed by facing towards the south. They also offer prayers to Prajapati. They sit around for a while and talk about the departed and about the transitory nature of life and the world.

Resolve	When they return home before entering the house, it is customary to step on a stone seeking strength from Ishwara with the following prayer: ***Ashmaniva Sthiro Bhuyasam*** *May I remain firm and unshaken as this stone.*

1.3 The Thirteen Days of Mourning

The bereaved observe symbolic act of impurity for a period that lasts for thirteen days. During this time they forsake all pleasures and observe behavior that is indicative of grief. The hearth is kept unlit in the home of the bereaved until the cremation ceremonies are completed. This is because the fire has to be lighted only as a ritual at this time for the purpose of offering unto the body of the deceased. Friends provide food to the family members.

Table 2 - The Thirteen Day Mourning Period

First Day Ceremony	
Cremation	Cremation of the body is performed before sunset.
Second Day Ceremony	
Collecting the Ashes Astisanchayanam	The ashes are collected from the site. In early Vedic times the females performed the collection of the ashes. In the current time, the person who lit the fire does this.
Immersing the Ashes Astivisarjanam	The ashes are then immersed in a sacred body of water, such as a river or ocean.

Third to Ninth Day	
Praying for the well being of the departed	The jiva during its life was closely associated and identified with a particular body. Before it takes another birth, depending on its karmas it continues its experience in another form of pitr and subsequently assumes another body. As a transitory state, after death and before it assumes the form of a pitr, it assumes the body called preta sharirah. Just as it takes nine months for a child to be formed, it takes nine days for the preta sharirah to be fully formed. The rituals that are performed for these nine days are for the well being of the jiva who is in the form of an intangible, transient body, the preta (vayavya sharirah).
Preparing the Pindas (Rice Balls)	The presence of the preta is invoked on an icon, pinda, and offerings are made of water and black sesame seeds.
Aurdhvadehika-samskarah	These rituals are performed for the next nine days during which offering of rice ball, pinda-danam, is made to the departed.
Tarpanam	This is a ritual in which offerings are made in form of water and black sesame seeds (til). The tarpanam is performed daily up to the tenth day.
Tenth Day	
Prayers to Yama	There are significant ceremonies performed on the tenth day. On the tenth day, the deceased is

	invoked in its preta form and offered food. The family prays to Yama the presiding deity of death and dharma to end the preta state and bless it for the onward journey.
Prabhuta-bali	Like a child at birth is hungry and needs food intake, the preta also experiences hunger and thirst and is offered food. Special food items particularly liked by the departed person are prepared. The food is then immersed in a river or ocean, or it is offered to a crow (kakabali) or a cow (pasubali). Prayers are offered to Yama devata to facilitate the onward journey. Needless to say that the food offered is symbolic and is not expected to be eaten by the deceased. Does the offering really reach the deceased? The Vedas assure us that they do, of course, not literally in their physical form but in their subtle form as a result of the karmas performed by the family. "Whatever is offered to the ancestors during shraddha ceremony goes to them in whatever form they exist. Just as a calf finds its mother among the scattered herd."
Ananda-homam and Santi-homam	Homa is performed for the jiva to gain happiness and peace. The prayers on this day are also meant for the family to gain peace and tranquility in dealing with their loss. The ceremony includes paring of hair, nails and beard of the folks who performed the rituals. Some shave their head as an expression of their bereavement.

Eleventh Day	
Prayers to Vishnu	The ceremonies of the eleventh day include prayers for the release of the jiva from the transient form of the preta. Prayers to Vishnu ask for the jiva's continued well being.
Offerings to Ancestors	On this day, offerings are made to the pitrs, sraddha, giving gifts to the needy, danam, and offering to Brahmins, brahmana-bhojanam.
Charity Vrsotsargah or Rsabhadanam	A bull is given as danam (charity) to a temple. Brahmanas are offered food and given dakshina. Prayers to Sri Vishnu are offered.
Twelfth Day	
Union with the Ancestors **Sapindikaranam**	It is the last day of the immediate mourning period. On the twelfth day, the concluding ceremonies to the preta are performed; Sapindikaranam, which means the union of the jiva with its ancestors, pitrs. After this day the family prays to the deceased as their ancestor and asks for his blessings.
Offering of food	The jiva gives up its transient preta sharirah and assume the form of pitr. This is symbolized in the ritual in which four pindas, ball of rice, are made; three for ancestors, pitrs, and one in which the jiva is invoked and offerings are made. Following this the pinda representing the jiva are joined with the three representing the pitrs symbolizing their union.

Feeding the Priests Brahmana-bhojanam	Three Brahmanas are invited. In them one invokes the lord, the departed jiva and pitr and they are given food.
Thirteenth Day	
Welcome Auspiciousness	The thirteenth day is a day of welcoming auspiciousness, subhasvikaranam, for the family. The family visits a temple to offer prayers. They resume their prayers at home by lighting a lamp. ***Sivam me astu sada gruhe.*** *May there always be auspiciousness in our home.*
Peace Prayers	Prayers are performed for peace, shanti, of the family members. Navagraha pooja is performed. The family members wear new clothes, go to temple, light a lamp and resume their daily routine. The jiva continues its onward journey to the abode of Yama devata.

Shri. Jagannath Temple, Puri



2 ANTYESHTI OBSERVANCE IN THE USA

"Even though people think time helps one cope up with the grief, it is not true. Time never heals. In time we heal ourselves by resorting to different methods. But all of them don't work to one's satisfaction. Hindu tradition over the ages has followed certain prayerful religious practices as well as varieties of psychological means to assimilate the reality of death. Even in life, the reality of death is objectively faced in Hindu Culture." - Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam.

The purpose of this book is to provide a procedure to cremate the body of the deceased person in accordance with Hindu tradition in the United States or at other places outside of Bharat. The procedures outlined below have been prepared based on references from authentic sources (see Section 14 on References). The Hindu Antyeshti sanskar varies according to the practices of people from different regions of India. The methods vary between families from the same region of India and these have been followed for centuries based on the traditions handed down from generation to generation. However, the core rituals have always been based on procedures outlined in the Vedic sutras[2] and apply to all, irrespective of geographical origin. While the traditional procedures are exhaustive, this document provides basic but essential steps to be performed.

The rituals outlined in this book have been illustrated in such a way that it is possible for those experienced in performing traditional puja or other rituals to perform these rituals too.

If one has access to the services of purohits/pandits/pujaris, it is recommended that their services be availed. However, if they are not

---

[2]The final ceremonies are described in taittiriya aranyaka portion of the Krsna Yajur Veda. There are more detailed and systematic descriptions in the grhyasutras of Bodhayana, Bharadvajah, Asvalayana and Hiranyakesi. The Garudapurana also describes the ceremonies in detail.

available to perform the cremation at the chosen place and time, then this book will serve as an adequate guide to perform the entire cremation ceremony.

2.1 Preparation (Social and Legal)

One is never prepared for death, much less preparations for it. Following are some helpful points in getting prepared for coping with death both during and after death.

1. Once it is established that death is certain, then a senior member in the family should inform all relatives and friends. If the nearest relatives are in India, inform them immediately and tell the truth about the individual's health (as recommended by the doctor). If possible, tell the relatives in India to visit the U.S as soon as possible, as this would be the last chance to see the individual.

2. If death is imminent, then tell friends and family to call and talk to the patient, if he/she desires to talk. Try to fulfill all desires and wishes of the individual, if possible. Just be with the patient and assure him/her that you will do the best you can to fulfill any wish. It is the family's responsibility to give love, support, and strength to a person who has limited time left in this world.

3. Do your best for your family. Pray together everyday, eat together and plan your daily routine in such a way that someone is with the patient at all times.

4. The family pandit/purohit/pujari should also be informed and should come and pray with the patient and family too.

5. You do not have to prepare in detail prior to death, as it is a very difficult time for the family. You may select a friend or a family member to work on behalf of the family to make arrangements.

6. Immediately after death, first inform family members, pandit/purohit/pujari and friends. Contact a funeral home informing them that you

are in need of their services. Funeral arrangements in the USA and other parts of the diaspora are different from those in India. All funeral homes do not have cremation facilities. Two out of ten may have cremation facilities. Though it is preferred to have cremation as soon as possible, it may not be possible to do cremation before 24 to 48 hours (after death) due to legal issues. You may have to inquire in your area of residence about how early you can arrange for a funeral as laws vary from state to state. The death certificate can be obtained from a funeral home. *If refrigeration of the body is possible, this is an option, but embalming of the body should be avoided, as this practice is not in accordance with the Hindu tradition. This is another reason to cremate the body as soon as possible.*

7. The funeral should be planned in a dignified manner. The funeral ceremony may be short (up to 2 hours) and not too long (3 to 4 hours). The funeral home should be informed prior to cremation regarding arrangements for collecting remains and storage, if they are to be stored for a longer time.

8. The cost of a funeral in USA may range from $ 3,000 to $ 6,000 depending upon the State, facilities and services.

9. There are different Hindu customs and practices regarding funerals based on regional and family traditions. One can take Asti (ashes) to India for Asti visarjan in a holy river (such as the Ganga). For practical purposes, one can do Asti visarjan in any river near their home in the USA, on day 2, 3, 5, 7 , 9 or 10th day. Immersion should not be performed on Friday.

10. Do not let family members of the deceased drive by themselves on the funeral day. Friends and community members should accompany them. Friends and community members should visit the home of the deceased person upto 12 to 13 days after the death, to do prayers and bhajans for 1-2 hours. The family needs

support during this tough time. Time is a big factor in healing. The fact of life is that a person who is born is going to die. The important thing is how we understand death and overcome suffering. Everyone's experience with death is different. However, all go through denial, suffering, and emotional crisis. In this period, the home should have activities for fostering faith in Bhagwaan to overcome the difficulties in this period.

2.2 Preparing the Individual

The depth of insight of our ancestors into the nature of the human mind and its functioning is impressive. The individual faced with death undergoes tremendous mental strain and uses defenses such as denial, fear, anger to cope with it.

Denial is not a conscious, deliberate decision not to talk. It is an unconscious protective mechanism of the mind to cope with a highly anxiety provoking situation at a particular time. A person may preoccupy himself with mundane matters that are unconnected with fact of his death. Denial may at times lead to reckless behavior.

Fear is another common emotion experienced by a dying person. It evokes a fear of the unknown - what would happen after death? Additionally, there is loss of family and friends. The individual experiences sadness. He worries, his sleep gets disturbed and he may lose his appetite. Individual may also experience guilt in varying degrees, recalling a lifetime of omissions and commissions.

Anger is another emotion experienced by the individual facing imminent death. Even though death is an inevitable fact of life, one does not willingly accept its occurrence.

Some individuals are more accepting than others. For Hindus, their spiritual tradition becomes a source of strength, reassurance and comfort. Hindu tradition emphasizes that the occurrence of birth underscores the certainty of death at some point.

Jatayasa vai manusyasya dhruvam maranam iti vijaniyat.

Know that for the individual who is born, death is inevitable indeed.Vedic tradition places a certain value on dispassion, vairagya, in regards to the world and the people one encounters in one's life. This attitude is based on the understanding of the ephemeral nature of the whole universe.

The following verse highlights the attitude of vairagya:

grhesvartha nivatante smasane caiva nandahavah
sariram kasthamadatte oaoam punyam sha vrjet

One's possessions are left behind at home and relatives left behind on the cremation ground. The body is consumed in the funeral pyre; only the deeds accompany the departed one.

"Individual's existence should be like a river - small at first, narrowly contained within its banks, and rushing passionately past boulders and over waterfalls. Gradually, as the river grows wider the banks recede, the water flows more quietly and in the end, without any visible break, it becomes merged in the sea and painlessly loses its individual form."

2.3 The Family Members

The final samskara (antyesthi) when performed with understanding and sincerity, undoubtedly helps an individual connected to the deceased go thorough the bereavement process and emerge from it as a more mature individual. The bereavement process also becomes a spiritually uplifting one.

The family members also have to deal with a variety of emotions. They get anxious, being engaged in the medical and nursing care of the person. A profound sense of helplessness engulfs them since they are unable to prevent what is happening. They feel they are letting him/her down. Sometimes this evokes anger at others for not doing more. For example this anger may be directed at doctors, caretakers, nurses or other family members. Anger could also be directed at God for causing pain and not responding to prayers.

Fear of losing someone they loved evokes sadness and fear. On the other hand, families may be pressured to maintain an appearance of normalcy. Thus they avoid showing their feelings. When a person does not know what another thinks, they start guessing. It is advisable to be as communicative as possible.

Sharing one's thoughts, feelings, concerns and fears is comforting even though it may be difficult to do. People discover a tremendous amount of strength from each other during difficult times. It is best to remain one's natural self.

During such a difficult time, one's Dharmic traditions become a source of strength and comfort for both the dying and those closely connected to him/her. A person preparing for death may feel that there are things that he/she wanted to do that are not done or things that he/she wanted to say that are unsaid. One likes to have family around to bid farewell to them. One tries to engage his/her mind in remembering Ishwara by reciting his name and thinking of his glories. Those around him/her facilitate this by reciting verses from the Vedas. Whenever possible, sacred water (tirtham) from rivers such as Ganga is given to the person.

Generally, Hindus recite verses from the Vedas such as Purushasuktam, Bhagvat Gita, Ramayana, and Vishnusahasranama. What one's mind is attuned to at the time death, determines one's *gati*, direction of onward journey after death, and also the next birth. Therefore the family and friends of a dying person provide an environment of spirituality and comfort during the final moments of his or her life.

Yam yath vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram
tam tam evaiti kaunteya sada tad-bhava-bhavitah

O Arjuna! thinking of whatever object a person gives up the body at the time of death, that very object he attains, being constantly absorbed in that thought.

- Gita 8.6

2.4 Solace after Death

The traditions associated with death ceremonies can be understood at different levels. They may be understood as a spiritual mandate based on Sraddha, faith based on reason and trust, and a time tested means of helping a human being experience an inevitable and

undesired fact of life, namely death, in a meaningful manner. The traditions can also be understood by appreciation of the sacred texts as a means of knowledge for things that are beyond the scope of human intellect to know.

Vedas are looked upon as a means of knowledge in regards to matters that are beyond the scope of knowledge of a human mind to arrive at by itself. A human mind can gain knowledge of various matters directly by sense perception and indirectly by inference based on sense perception. An average person cannot perceive what happens to an individual after his death. So how do you establish the validity of the Vedas? The Vedas talk about "ends" and about means to accomplish them. In this pursuit of means and ends, there can be known means for achieving known ends, unknown means for achieving known ends. With respect to self knowledge, tradition has established the truth of the words of the Vedas as a means of knowing oneself. Self knowledge has been passed down from one generation to the next in an unbroken line of teaching tradition to the present day and is available for any individual to access.

The Vedic tradition also emphasizes that what is said in the Vedas should be consistent with reason and not contradicted by experience. One thus develops trust in the words of the Vedas as a means of knowledge in regard to unknown ends and the means for achieving them, since what they say is not illogical and is not contradicted by experience.

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

jaatasya hi dhruvo mRutyurdhruvaM janma mRutasya cha |
tasmaadaparihaaryerthe na tvaM shochitumarhasi ||

For to that which is born, death is certain, and to that which is dead, birth is certain. Therefore you should not grieve over the unavoidable (inevitable).

Bhagavad Gita 2/27

3 GENERAL GUIDELINES

"Everything perishes with the death of the body. It is only Dharma (righteousness) that is our real friend, which even after death remains with the spirit. Therefore do not allow the Dharma to perish, for Dhrama (when) perished brings about our (own) destruction." - Manusmriti

---

3.1 Who should perform Cremation?

Following is the order of vested authority and responsibility for cremation of the deceased.

Deceased male person

Eldest son, eldest of the next available son, grandson (son's son), adopted son, grandson (daughter's son), wife, daughter, younger brother, brother's son (eldest to youngest available), father, elder brother, mother, daughter-in-law, sister, sister's son, son-in-law, friend.

Deceased female person

Eldest son, eldest of the next available son, grandson (son's son), adopted son, grandson (daughter's son), husband, daughter, husband's younger brother, husband's brother's son, eldest to youngest available, husband's father, husband's elder brother, husband's mother, daughter-in-law, husband's sister's son, friend.

Transfer of Authority

In both cases above, if the chosen person is a woman or a minor son/daughter, the following ritual is performed, which provides for delegation of authority to a male person who actually performs the rites.

The person who actually performs the rites is called *Kartaa*. At the commencement of the ceremony, the chosen person should hand over 2 or 3 kusha (Darba) to the *Kartaa*. The *Kartaa* should keep the

kusha tied to his clothes and keep them tied until the end of the ceremony. This ritual symbolically authorizes the *Kartaa* to perform the rites on behalf of the person who is actually entitled to perform the rites.

3.2 Selection of Location, Time of Cremation and Memorial Service

According to Hindu tradition, the body of the deceased person should be cremated as soon as possible, after death, based on the guidelines indicated below. The body should be cremated any time between sunrise and sunset. No cremation should be performed during the hours between sunset and sunrise.

The tradition is not to delay the cremation process beyond the same day (if the death occurs in the early morning) or the following day, if the death occurs late in the evening or previous night. A cremation not performed immediately attracts dosha, a shortcoming, caused by decomposing body. However due to the difficult circumstances in arranging for cremation outside of India, (like the time needed for arranging the priest, selecting a cremation center, getting a death certificate and waiting for family members) it may take a day or two to be ready for cremation.

Following are some of the considerations in selecting the time and location:

Cremation

1. Every effort must be made to cremate the body of the person with the minimal loss of time from the time of death. This factor should be kept in mind in deciding the cremation time.

2. It is desirable to have the presence of all the children/spouse of the deceased or the parent(s) in the case of cremation of deceased child, to participate in the final rites of the deceased. However, if a delay of more than 2 to 3 days is anticipated in their arrival, resulting in further delays, it may be advisable to proceed with

cremation of the body with the closest relative, who can perform the rites.

3. Please check with funeral home/cremation centers about the earliest and the latest time of cremation permitted and days they are open for business. Please call several cremation centers, if available and select the center that will provide the earliest slot. *It is advisable to select a location where it is possible to conduct both the ceremony and cremation under one roof. Some funeral homes offer accommodation only for memorial service/ceremony and require the body to be transported to another location for cremation. This option is not recommended and should be avoided if possible. It is difficult to perform the rituals in an appropriate manner, if they are performed at two different locations.*

4. All should be notified once the place and time of cremation are finalized. It is certainly desirable to have all close family and friends present for the cremation ceremony, but this should not be a deciding factor in choosing the time of cremation. The emphasis should be on completing the cremation rites as soon as possible after death. A memorial service could be arranged at a later date for those who missed attending the cremation ceremony, to show their respects.

The cremation ceremony is primarily for performing rituals and on this solemn private occasion, ceremonial/public speeches should not be entertained.

Memorial Service

According to the Hindu tradition, a memorial service is typically not performed before or on the cremation day. The emphasis is placed on the family performing the last rites of the deceased, with the support of close relatives and friends.

A memorial service may take the form of a puja/Bhajan/pravachan on the 4th, 10th or 13th day after the death of the person or in special circumstances, at another time convenient to all. This may be arranged at a mandir, home or community center. A lunch or dinner may be served.

During this time, close friends and others may want to say a few words of support and share their grief and offer condolences to the family.

3.3 Role of Priest in Antyeshti/Cremation rites

According to the Hindu tradition, the *Kartaa* (see section 3.1) has the sole responsibility and authority to perform cremation rites. The pandit/purohit/pujari has only an advisory role and guides the *Kartaa.* The pandit/purohit/pujari is not entitled to perform the rites directly.

A qualified priest is the first preference in guiding the *Kartaa* for properly conducting the ceremony. If one is not available, then any one who is familiar with performing Hindu Vedic rituals and the proper chanting of mantras can assume the role of the priest for guiding the *Kartaa* in performing antyeshti rites.

A person who regularly performs rituals or pujas should be able to follow these instructions for guiding the *Kartaa* to perform the antyesthti rites. The mantras are given in both Devanaagari script with swaras along with the English transliteration. Familiarity and ability to read Devanaagari script will be beneficial.

The person standing in for the priest (hereafter referred to as the priest) should read the procedure in detail and in advance in order to become familiar with the words/terms and the instructions illustrated. This will allow orderly conduct of the ceremony.

The priest should guide the family in gathering the required materials used in cremation, ahead of time and also play an advisory role to assist every one including personnel at the cremation center on the sequence of events to be followed during the ceremony. This will result in better cooperation and support from the cremation center.

Separate mantras are provided (where needed) depending upon whether the *Kartaa* is performing the ritual for his deceased father or

mother. If the *Kartaa* is performing the rituals for a person other than the father or the mother, the mantras are changed and indicated accordingly, whenever this occurs. The priest should carefully review the mantras prior to the ceremony and should be thoroughly conversant with the chanting of the mantras.

IMPORTANT: The priest is only assisting the *Kartaa* who is performing antyeshti rites. Therefore, after the priest chants a mantra, the *Kartaa* should repeat the mantra. These mantras are outlined in this document. The meaning of the mantras explain whether the *Kartaa* is performing the rites for the father or mother or another deceased person.

3.4 Materials needed for Cremation

Following materials are needed to conduct the cremation ceremony.

1. Plain Rice (2lb)
2. Sesame seed (1/4 lb)
3. Sandal paste (1 cup)
4. Garland (1 regular)
5. Garland (1 with Tulsi if available, if not available, use Tulsi to the extent available)
6. Traditional new clothes to decorate the body (Dhoti, kurta, sari etc.)
7. Sandal wood stick(s)
8. Ghee (2 Lbs), a copper container for ghee with a metal/wood spoon. The ghee should be made into a liquid form immediately prior to the commencement of the rituals
9. Long Kusha (quantity of about 20) (also called Darba, a type of grass stick used in Havan)
10. Container (quantity-2) and two metal spoons to dispense water (pancha patram)
11. A small kalash (container to hold water)
12. Ganga Jal
13. Match box

14. Cow dung patties if available (quantity of 4)
15. Dry coconut kernel (quantity of six, break these into small pieces, no more than 2 inches long)
16. Camphor (1 packet)
17. Lamp with cotton wicks and ghee/oil (one or two lamps, as per family tradition)
18. Some families keep a picture of their Ishta Devataa and decorate with garland
19. Havan Kundam (Havan kundam shall be made with an 8 inch diameter earthen plate wrapped in Aluminum foil, it should be small in size. This needs to be placed on the chest of the body during ceremony and will remain with the body during cremation inside the electric furnace)
20. A few rolls of paper towel for clean up
21. A piece of string to tie the big toes of the feet and thumb fingers of the hands of the body together
22. Coins (Quarters or dollar, about 30)
23. A packet of sand

The materials indicated above may be obtained from Temple/Indian grocery stores/local priests/friends. Every effort must be made to collect these materials as soon as possible, since all these materials may not be available from one source.

4 ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO DEATH (When Death is Imminent)

"Vayuranilammamritamathedam Bhasmantam Shariram
Om Krto Smara Krutam Smara Krto Smara Krutam Smara."

The atman which is immortal is not made of the five elements and does not perish. This body will be reduced to ashes. Therefore, O mortal! (At the time of death) remember the almighty Om, remember Ishwara, and remember thy past deeds, as by so doing can one attain moksha.

- Yajurveda 40.15 (also Isa Upanishad).

The following rituals should be performed when death is imminent. These rituals can be performed even if the patient is in the hospital. A request to attending medical personnel shall be made in that case for accommodation to perform these rituals.

4.1 Prokshana

In this procedure water from holy river Ganga should be sprinkled on the body of the person and/or poured into the mouth of the person.

Sprinkle Ganga water on the body and pour into the mouth.

Take a few spoonful of Ganga water and feed through the mouth of the person who is in the last moments of life. Even if only a little amount of holy water can be given, it is sufficient. Chant the name of the family kula devata, Om, Ram, Krishna, Shiva or Narayana as many times as possible while feeding the holy Ganga water. If the holy Ganga water is not available with the family make a request to other Hindu families and they will certainly assist at this time of need.

4.2 Chanting of Names of Bhagwan

Chant the names of God in or near the right ear of the person, if possible. Chant Om, the names of Ram, Krishna or other Ishta

Devataas according to the family tradition or the wish of the dying person. The son, daughter, wife or husband or other family members who are near the person should perform this chanting. All can join and chant if possible, while an immediate family member should chant near the right ear of the person. Chant at least 108 times or more, if possible.

1. Chant names of Bhagwaan.
2. If possible, chant appropriate Bhajans, Vishnu Sahasranama stotra etc.

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Shiva Shiva Shiva Shiva Shivaya Nama Om
Hara Hara Hara Hara Haraya Nama Om

Om Namo Narayanaya !
Om Namo Narayanaya !

One may also wish to read the seventh, twelveth and fifteenth chapter of Bhagavad Gita. One may wish to read entire Gita or any selected chapter(s) of Ramayana or any other sacred dharma scripture.

All beings are unmanifest in their beginning,
O Arjuna, manifest in their middle state,
and unmanifest again in their end.
Why, then, lament (grieve) for them?
The Bhagavad Gita 2/28

5 PRIOR TO CREMATION ACTIVITIES

If the death occurs at home or away from home, call phone number 911. The body is normally taken away in an ambulance for medical examination by the local county emergency personnel. If the death occurs at a hospital, an examination is performed. Once the death is pronounced, the body is allowed to be taken to a funeral home. The county laws vary. Normally the body is not allowed to be taken to one's home.

The activities mentioned below are normally performed at the funeral home. The funeral home personnel may assist in performing some of these activities. They normally extend all possible help and accommodate the religious and emotional needs of the families. They usually have facilities to perform these activities. The families can perform these activities by themselves or with the assistance of these personnel.

After death of an individual, the immediate concern of the family is for the proper disposal of the dead body. Hindus do not leave the preparation of the body for disposal to professionals who are unconnected to the deceased. The family prepares the body for cremation and stays with it until it is cremated. This makes the whole experience of losing a loved one very intimate and intense. It makes one see the reality of death and impermanence of life in a manner that is vivid and unforgettable. In appreciating the reality of death, one learns to clearly value life and not take it for granted.

Several customs such as tying toes of the corpse together, tying a cloth around the jaws are meant to prevent the undesirable effects of rigor mortis on the dead body. The ceremonies performed prior to cremation are meant for the disposal of the dead body with sanctity, reverence and care. By the ceremonies, the body is sanctified and made fit for cremation, dahan-yogyah. The body is anointed with sacred water while offering prayers to deities. The southern direction

represents mortality and death and so the body is placed with its head **towards the south**. The Bhagwat Gita Chapter 8, or Kathopanishad Chapter 1, or Ishavasyopanishad are recited.

Even if the body has to be preserved for a period it should not be subjected to the process of embalming. Embalming is not consistent with the process of ritual purification of the body for cremation. If the body has to be preserved for a while it may be preserved in cold temperature.

5.1 Washing the Body

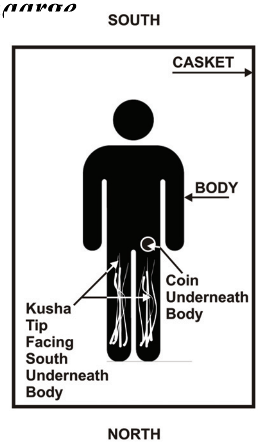
The body should be carefully washed as appropriate and possible. If a full bath can not be performed, a symbolic sponge bath may be performed. In both cases, a small amount of holy water from Ganga should be mixed with the regular water. The reason for washing is that the body is being offered as Ahuti to Agni and the body needs to be physically clean for the offering.

After washing of the body, new clothes should be used to dress the body. The old clothes should be discarded.

The underlying message in removing the old clothes can be gleaned from a Sanskrit verse:

"Dhanaani bhuumau pashavashcha goshthe,
Naari gruhadware sakhaa smashaane,
Dehashchitaayaaam paraloka maarge
Dharmaanugo gachhati jiva ekaha."

Wealth will remain buried, cattle will remain in the pen, (his) wife will accompany (him) to the doorway, friends will accompany him to the crematorium, the body will come till the funeral pyre, but on the path to the next world, the jiva goes alone (with his karmas).



5.2 Placing the Body inside the Casket

The casket should be placed in the north-south direction. The body should be placed inside the casket, with the head facing south.

The casket should be decorated with flowers as appropriate. Place about 5 or 7 kusha inside the casket, underneath the body, with the tip of the kusha facing south. A coin should be placed beneath the body.

5.3 Alankaram of the Dead Body

On the forehead of the body, Tilak should be applied in accordance with the family tradition. It is customary to apply Chandan/Kumkum/ Bhasma on the forehead. A garland containing Tulsi leaves should be offered, if available. More than one garland could also be offered if available. Any Maalas typically worn by the person or other Maalas may also be offered, if desired.

A piece of white string should be used to gently tie together the big toes of the feet of the dead body. Similarly a piece of white string should be used to gently tie the thumb fingers of the hands of the dead body together. Tie them gently. These knots need to be removed later on.

Varanasi



6 PRETA AGNI SANDAANAM

Prior to the commencement of the rituals, the casket containing the body shall be moved to the area where the rituals are to be performed. The casket shall be placed in the north-south direction, with the head facing south. Light the lamp(s) and place near the picture of Ishta Devataa in a nearby area, away from the body.

Immediately prior to the commencement of the Preta Agni Sandhaanam, the *Kartaa* should take a shower and wear traditional clothes. If facility for a full shower does not exist at the funeral home/cremation center, the Kartaa should sprinkle water, a total of ten times on his body. It is customary to not wear any tilak on the forehead during the cremation ceremony. Also it is customary to perform the ceremony with wet clothes (veshti) and without the Angavastram in the South Indian tradition. The traditions vary. Follow the family tradition if known and seek the guidance of elders who can provide that advice.

6.1 Offering of Namaskara

Relatives should offer namaskaara with hair disheveled, prostrating towards the southern direction, towards the body.

Reminder: The priest should chant the mantra and the Kartaa should repeat all mantras. The instructions provided herein are for the Kartaa unless indicated otherwise.

Anugna (permission for *Kartaa* to perform Agnisandhanam)

Put four coins on a plate, sprinkle little water on the coins. The *Kartaa* should stand up and recite the following mantra.

अशेषे हे परिषत् भवत्पादमूले मया समर्पिताम् इमां सौवर्णी दक्षिणां यत्किंचिदपि दक्षिणां यथोक्त दक्षिणामिव ताम्बूलं च स्वीकृत्य।

asheShe he pariShat bhavatpaadamUle mayaa
samarpitaam imaam souvarNeem dakShiNaam

yatkinchidapi dakShiNaam yathokta
dakShiNaamiva taambUlaM cha sweekrutya |

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**. Insert the gotra, name of the deceased person in the blank space and complete the mantra.

Cremation of father, performed by the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य मम पितुः प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

.......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya mama pitu: prathamehani
paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanam kartum
yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa |

Cremation of a male person, performed by other than the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य यजमानस्य प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya yajamaanasya prathamehani
paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanam kartum
yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa |

Cremation of mother, performed by the son:

.......गोत्रायाः.......नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः मम मातुः प्रथमेऽहनि पैतृमेधिक
संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

.......gotraayaa:.........naamnyaa:pretaayaa: mama maatu:
prathamehani paitRumedhika samskaaraartham
pretaagnisandhaanam kartum yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa |

Cremation of a female person, performed by other than the son:

.... गोत्रायाः.......नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः यजमान्याः प्रथमेऽहनि पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

.......gotraayaa: .... naamnyaa: pretaayaa: yajamaanyaa: prathamehani paitRumedhika samskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanam kartum yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa |

Offer these coins to the priest.

The priest should say **योग्यतासिद्धिरस्तु ।** yogyataasiddhirastu |

Sankalpa (stating of purpose of the ritual)
Now the *Kartaa* should sit on the floor and continue with the rituals. After chanting each mantra below, take a spoon of water in your palm and drink the water.

अच्युताय नमः । अनन्ताय नमः । गोविन्दाय नमः ।

Achyutaaya nama: | anantaaya nama: | govindaaya nama: |

Chant the following mantras:

केशव, नारायण, माधव, गोविन्द, विष्णो, मधुसूदन, त्रिविक्रम, वामन, श्रीधर, हृषीकेश, पद्मनाभ, दामोदर ।

keshava, naaraayaNa, maadhava, govinda, vishNo, madhusUdana, trivikrama, vaamana, shrIdhara, hrushIkesha, padmanaabha, damodara |

Chant the following mantras: (insert appropriate name of year, ayana, ruthu, month, paksh and tithi and day in the sankalpa)

श्री गोविन्द गोविन्द गोविन्द अद्य श्रीभगवतः महापुरुषस्य विष्णोः आज्ञया प्रवर्तमानस्य आद्यब्रह्मणः द्वितीयपरार्धे श्वेतवराहकल्पे वैवस्वत मन्वन्तरे अष्टाविंशतितमे कलियुगे प्रथमेपादे क्रौञ्चद्वीपे ऐन्द्रखण्डे उत्तर अमेरिक्कादेशे अस्मिन् वर्तमाने व्यावहारिके प्रभवादीनां षष्ट्याः संवत्सराणां मध्ये.... नाम

संवत्सरे.... अयने..... ऋतौ.... मासे.... पक्षे...... तिथौ........ वासरयुक्तायां विष्णुयोग विष्णुकरण एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायाम् अस्यां पुण्यतिथौ

shrIgovinda govinda govinda adya shrIbhagavata: mahaapuruShasya viShNo: aajyayaa pravartamaanasya aadyabrahmaNa: dvitIyaparaardhe shvetavaraahakalpe vaivasvata manvantare aShTaavimshatitame kaliyuge prathamepaade krounchadwIpe aindrakhaNDe uttara amerikkaadeshe asmin vartamaane vyaavahaarike prabhavaadInaam ShaShTyaa: samvatsaraaNaam madhye..... naama samvatsare..... ayane..... Rutou...maase.... pakShe......tithou...... vaasarayuktaayaam viShNuyoga viShNukaraNa evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam asyaam puNyatithou

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

Cremation of father, performed by the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः....... प्रेतस्य मम पितुः प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं करिष्ये ।

....gotrasya..........naamna:.......pretasya mama pitu: prathamehani
paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanam kariShye |

Cremation of a male person, performed by other than the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः....... प्रेतस्य यजमानस्य प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं करिष्ये ।

......gotrasya..........naamna:.......pretasya yajamaanasya
prathamehani paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham
pretaagnisandhaanam kariShye |

Cremation of mother, performed by the son:

.......गोत्रायाः.......नाम्न्याः...... प्रेतायाः मम मातुः प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं करिष्ये ।

......gotraayaa:..........naamnyaa:.......pretaayaa: mama maatu:
prathamehani paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham
pretaagnisandhaanam kariShye |

Cremation of a female person, performed by other than the son:

.......गोत्रायाः.......नाम्न्याः...... प्रेतायाः यजमान्याः प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानं करिष्ये ।

......gotraayaa:..........naamnyaa:.......pretaayaa: yajamaanyaa: prathamehani paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanam kariShye |

Hiranyadanam for Agnisandhanam

Put four coins on a plate, sprinkle little water on the coins and chant the following mantra.

प्रेताग्निसन्धानकाले तिथिवार नक्षत्र लग्न योग करणादिभिः
यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोषपरिहारार्थं यत् किंचित् प्राजापत्य
कृच्छ्रत्रय प्रत्याम्नाय हिरण्यदानं करिष्ये ।

pretaagnisandhaanakaale tithivaara nakShatra lagna yoga karaNaadibhi: yo doSha: samajani taddoShaparihaaraartham yat kimchit praajaapatya KRucchratraya pratyaamnaaya hiraNyadaanam kariSnye |

हिरण्यगर्भ गर्भस्थं हेमबीजं विभावसोः
अनन्तपुण्य-फलदम् अतः शान्तिं प्रयच्छ मे ।

hiraNyagarbha garbhastham hemabIjam vibhaavaso: anantapuNya Paladam ata: shaantim prayachCha me |

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

Cremation of father, performed by the son:

......गोत्रस्य ......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य मम पितुः प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानकाले तिथिवार
नक्षत्र लग्न योग करणादिभिः यो दोषः समजनि
तद्दोषपरिहारार्थं प्राजापत्य कृच्छ्र प्रत्याम्नाय हिरण्यं सम्प्रददे ।

.......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya mama pitu: prathamehani
paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanakaale
tithivaara nakShatra lagna yoga karaNaadibhi: yo doSha: samajani
taddoShaparihaaraartham praajaapatya
kRucchra pratyaamnaaya hiraNyam sampradade |

Cremation of a male person, performed by other than the son:

......गोत्रस्य ......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य यजमानस्य प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानकाले तिथिवार
नक्षत्र लग्न योग करणादिभिः यो दोषः समजनि
तद्दोषपरिहारार्थं प्राजापत्य कृच्छ्र प्रत्याम्नाय हिरण्यं सम्प्रददे ।

.......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya yajamaanasya prathamehani
paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanakaale
tithivaara nakShatra lagna yoga karaNaadibhi: yo doSha: samajani
taddoShaparihaaraartham praajaapatya
kRucchra pratyaamnaaya hiraNyam sampradade |

Cremation of mother, performed by the son:

......गोत्रायाः ......नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः मम मातुः प्रथमेऽहनि
पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानकाले तिथिवार
नक्षत्र लग्न योग करणादिभिः यो दोषः समजनि
तद्दोषपरिहारार्थं प्राजापत्य कृच्छ्र प्रत्याम्नाय हिरण्यं सम्प्रददे ।

.......gotraayaa: .... naamnyaa: pretaayaa: mama maatu:
prathamehani
paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanakaale tithivaara
nakShatra lagna yoga karaNaadibhi: yo doSha: samajani
taddoShaparihaaraartham praajaapatya
kRucchra pratyaamnaaya hiraNyam sampradade |

Cremation of a female person, performed by other than the son:

......गोत्रायाः ......नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः यजमान्याः प्रथमेऽहनि पैतृमेधिक संस्कारार्थं प्रेताग्निसन्धानकाले तिथिवार नक्षत्र लग्न योग करणादिभिः यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोषपरिहारार्थं प्राजापत्य कृच्छ्र प्रत्याम्नाय हिरण्यं सम्प्रददे ।

.......gotraayaa:.........naamnyaa:pretaayaa: yajamaanyaa: prathamehani paitRumedhika saMskaaraartham pretaagnisandhaanakaale tithivaara nakShatra lagna yoga karaNaadibhi: yo doSha: samajani taddoShaparihaaraartham praajaapatya kRucchra pratyaamnaaya hiraNyam sampradade |

Offer these coins to the priest.

Agnisandhana Havan

Place the homa kundam on the floor. Place a few pieces of cow dung patties, coconut kernel inside the homa kundam and light with camphor to create fire.

Take some water in a spoon and sprinkle around the homa kundam in the anti clockwise direction once.

Take some ghee from the container and pour into the homa kundam fire after silently chanting the mantra below. (perform Ahuti 12 times. Pouring is called Ahuti).

प्रजापतय इदं न मम । prajaapataya idam na mama |

After chanting each mantra below, pour ghee into the fire (Perform Ahuti 12 times for mantra below and the next four mantras).

ओम् भूर्भुवस्सुवस्वाहा । प्रजापतय इदम् ।

Om bhUrbhuvassuvaswaahaa | prajaapataya idam |

अयाश्चाग्नेऽसिं अनभिशस्तीश्चं सत्यमित्त्वमया असि । अयंसा मनंसा धृतोऽयसां हव्यमूंहिषे अयनों धेहि भेषजं स्वाहां । अग्नये अयस इदम् ।

ayaashchaagnesi anaBishashtIscha satyamittvamayaa asi |
ayasaa manasaa DhRutoyasaa havyamUhiShe ayano
dhehi bheShajam swaahaa | agnaye ayasa idam |

अनाज्ञातम् यदाज्ञातम् यज्ञस्य क्रियते मिथु ।
अग्ने तदस्य कल्पय त्वं हि वेत्थ यथा तथं स्वाहा । अग्नय इदम् ।

anaajyaatam yadaajyaatam yajyasya kriyate mithu |
agne tadasya kalpaya tvam hi vettha yathaa tatham swaahaa |
agnaya idam |

पुरुषसम्मितो यज्ञः । यज्ञः पुरुषसम्मितः अग्ने तदस्य कल्पय त्वं हि वेत्थ यथा तथं स्वाहा । अग्नय इदम् ।

puruShasammito yajya: | yajya: puruShasammita: agne tadasya kalpaya tvam hi vettha yathaa tatham swaahaa |
agnaya idam |

यत्पाकत्रा मनसा दीन दक्षान । यज्ञस्य मन्वते मर्तासः । अग्निष्टद्धौतो क्रतुवित् विजानन् यजिष्टो देवान् ऋतुशो यजाति स्वाहा । अग्नय इदम् ।

yatpaakatraa manasaa dIna dakShaana | yajyasya manvate martaasa: | agniShTaddhoutaa kratuvit vijaanan yajiShTo devaan Rutusho yajaati swaahaa | agnaya idam |

Take some ghee and perform one Ahuti into agni.

भूर्भुवस्सुवस्वाहा । प्रजापतय इदम् ।

bhUrbhuvassuvaswaahaa | prajaapataya idam |

Leave the fire on inside the homakundam and continue with cremation rituals as indicated in Section 7.

7 CREMATION

NOTE: The rituals indicated under Section 6 MUST be performed prior to performing rituals under Section 7.

The cremation ceremony is incomplete without the performance of rituals under both Sections 6 and Section 7.

Anugna (permission for *Kartaa* to perform cremation)

Put four coins on a plate, sprinkle little water on the coins. The *Kartaa* should stand up and chant the following mantra.

अशेषे हे परिषत् भवत्पादमूले मया समर्पिताम् इमां सौवर्णीं दक्षिणां यत्किंचित् दक्षिणां यथोक्त दक्षिणामिव ताम्बूलं च स्वाकृत्य ।

asheShe he pariShat bhavatpaadamUle mayaa samarpitaam imaam souvarNeem dakShiNaam yatkinchit dakShiNaam yathokta dakShiNaamiva taambUlaM cha sweekrutya |

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

Cremation of father, performed by the son:

......गोत्रं......नाम्नं प्रेतं मम पितरम् औपासनाग्निना पैतृमेधिक विधिना सम्स्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

.......gotram......... naamnam pretam mama pitaram aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa samskartum yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa |

Cremation of a male person, performed by other than the son:

......गोत्रं......नाम्नं प्रेतं यजमानम् औपासनाग्निना पैतृमेधिक विधिना सम्स्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

.......gotram......... naamnam pretam yajamaanam aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa samskartum yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa |

Cremation of mother, performed by the son:

......गोत्रां......नाम्नीं प्रेतां मम मातरम् औपासनाग्निना
पैतृमेधिक विधिना सम्स्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

.......gotraam......... naamneem pretaam mama maataram aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa samskartum yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa |

Cremation of a female person, performed by other than the son:

......गोत्रां......नाम्नीं प्रेतां यजमानीम् औपासनाग्निना
पैतृमेधिक विधिना सम्स्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिमनुगृहाण ।

.......gotraam......... naamneem pretaam yajamaaneem aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa samskartum yogyataasiddhimanugruhaaNa|

Offer these coins to the priest.

The priest should say योग्यतासिद्धिरस्तु । yogyataasiddhirastu |

Sankalpa (stating of purpose of the ritual)

The *Kartaa* should sit on the floor and continue with the rituals. Chant the following mantra:

श्रीगोविन्द गोविन्द गोविन्द अद्य श्रीभगवतः महापुरुषस्य विष्णोः आज्ञया प्रवर्तमानस्य आद्यब्रह्मणः द्वितीयपरार्धे श्वेतवराहकल्पे वैवस्वत मन्वन्तरे अष्टाविंशतितमे कलियुगे प्रथमेपादे क्रौञ्चद्वीपे ऐन्द्रखण्डे उत्तर अमेरिक्कादेशे अस्मिन् वर्तमाने व्यावहारिके प्रभवादीनां षष्ट्याः संवत्सराणां मध्ये.....नाम संवत्सरे..... अयने..... ऋतौ..... मासे..... पक्षे..... तिथौ..... वासरयुक्तायां विष्णुयोग विष्णुकरण एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टयाम् अस्यां पुण्यतिथौ

shrIgovinda govinda govinda adya srIbhagavata: mahaapuruShasya viShNo: aaj~jayaa pravartamaanasya aadyabrahmaNa: dvitIyaparaardhe shvetavaraahakalpe vaivasvata manvantare aShTaavimshatitame kaliyuge prathamepaade krounchadwIpe aindrakhaNDe uttara amerikkaadeshe asmin vartamaane vyaavahaarike prabhavaadInaam ShaShTyaa: samvatsaraaNaam madhye.... naama samvatsare ... ayane..... Rutou... maase.... pakShe...... tithou.......]vaasarayuktaayaam viShNuyoga viShNukaraNa evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam asyaam puNyatithou

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

Cremation of father, performed by the son:

......गोत्रं......नाम्नं प्रेतं मम पितरम् औपासनाग्निना
पैतृमेधिक विधिना संस्करिष्यामि ।

.......gotram......... naamnam pretam mama pitaram aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa saMskariShyaami |

Cremation of a male person, performed by other than the son:

......गोत्रं......नाम्नं प्रेतं यजमानम् औपासनाग्निना
पैतृमेधिक विधिना संस्करिष्यामि ।

.......gotram......... naamnam pretam yajamaanam aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa saMskariShyaami |

Cremation of mother, performed by the son:

......गोत्रां......नाम्नीं प्रेतां मम मातरम् औपासनाग्निना
पैतृमेधिक विधिना संस्करिष्यामि ।

.......gotraam......... naamneem pretaam mama maataram aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa saMskariShyaami |

Cremation of a female person, performed by other than the son:

......गोत्रां......नाम्नीं प्रेतां यजमानीम् औपासनाग्निना
पैतृमेधिक विधिना संस्करिष्यामि ।

.......gotraam......... naamneem pretaam yajamaaneem
aupaasanaagninaa paitRumedhika vidhinaa saMskariShyaami |

Hiranyadanam for Cremation

Put four coins on a plate, sprinkle little water on the coins and chant the following mantra.

अद्यपूर्वोक्त एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायाम् अस्याम्.....
पुण्यतिथौ पैतृमेधिक विधिना संस्कारकरणकाले तिथिवार नक्षत्रः
यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष परिहारार्थं हिरण्यं सम्प्रददे ।

adyapoorvokta evaMguNa viSeShaNa vishiShTaayaam asyaam....
puNyatithou paitRumedhika vidhinaa saMskaarakaraNakaale
tithivaara nakShatra: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha
parihaaraartham hiraNyam sampradade |

Offer these coins to the priest.

Place two long kushas beneath the body one each on the right and left side of the body while chanting the mantra below.

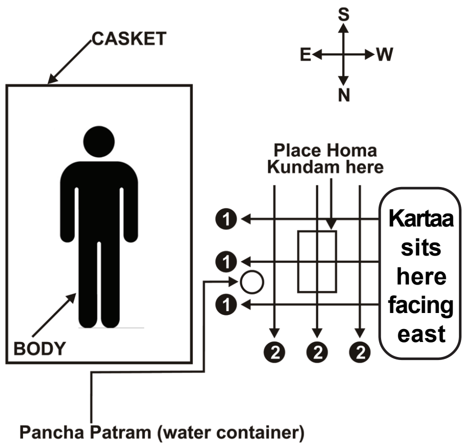
सर्वस्य प्रतिशीवरी भूमिस्त्वोपस्थ आधित ।
स्योनाऽस्मै सुषदा भव यच्छास्मै शर्म सप्रथाः ॥

sarvasya pratisheevarI bhUmistvopastha aadhita |
syonaasmai suShadaa bhava yacChaasmai sharma saprathaa: ||

Paristarana (placing of homa kundam and creation of fire)

Select a location close to the body. Using one kusha, draw three parallel lines symbolically on the floor towards east, draw three lines symbolically on the floor towards north. Place the homa kundam with fire on top of these lines.

Place a container (pancha patram) with water on the east side of the homa kundam. Take some water from this container using the spoon. Starting from the middle of the south side of the homa kundam, sprinkle water around the homa kundam in an anti-clockwise direction and complete one round.



Using Kusha
❶ Draw 3 Lines Towards East
❷ Draw 3 Lines Towards North

Take two kushas in the left hand; touch the dead body with the kushas. Take a spoon of ghee on the right hand and pour it into the homakundam fire after chanting the following mantra.

परेयुवांसं प्रवतो महीरनुबहुभ्यः पन्थाः मनपस्पशानम् ।
वैवस्वतं संगमनं जनानां यमं राजानं हविषा दुवस्यत स्वाहा। यमाय इदम् ॥

pareyuvaagMsam pravato maheeranubahubhya: panthaa: manapaspashaanam | vaivasvatagM saMgamanam janaanaaM yamam raajaanagM haviShaa duvasyata swaahaa | yamaaya idam ||

Pour ghee once more into the agni after chanting following mantra:

मध्ये संभावित समस्त लोप प्रायश्चित्तार्थं प्रजापतये स्वाहा । प्रजापतय इदम् ॥

madhye saMbhaavita samasta lopa praayashchittaartham prajapataye swaahaa| prajaapataya idam ||

Carefully remove the knots of the thread tied to the big toes of the feet and the thumb fingers of the hand and dispose of the thread.

Take some water from the same container using spoon as before. Starting from the middle of the south side of the homa kundam, sprinkle water around the homa kundam in an anti-clockwise direction once more.

The *Kartaa* should take some water from a different container and sprinkle on both palms of his hands while chanting the following mantra.

सुवर्णम् हस्ता दाददाना मृतस्य श्रियै ब्रह्मणे तेजसे बलाय ।
अत्रैव त्वमिह वयं सुशेवा विश्वास्पृधो अभिमातीर्जयेम ॥

suvarNam hastaa daadadaanaa mrutasya sriyai brahmaNe tejase balaaya | atraiva tvamiha vayam sushevaa vishwaaspRudho abhimaateerjayema ||

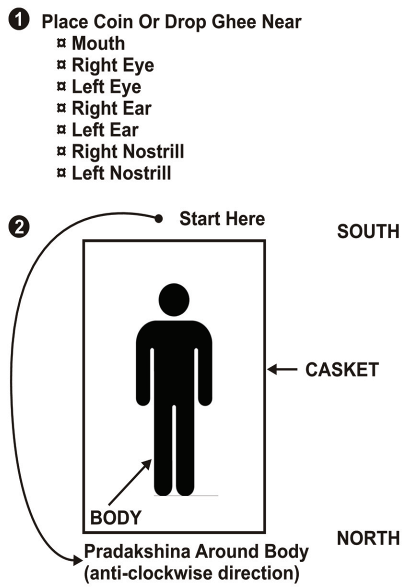
Pradakshina and Placing of Rice and Til (Sesame seeds)

The Kartaa should place a coin each near the mouth, right eye, left eye, right ear, left ear, right nostril and left nostril of the body. Instead of coins, a drop each of ghee may be poured at these seven locations.

Pradakshina and placing of Rice and Til is customarily done in the following order:

Friends, relatives, daughters and sons from the youngest to the oldest. If the *Kartaa* is not the son, *Kartaa* is the last person to do pradakshina and place the sesame seed and/or rice.

Each participating person, should start at the head of the body and walk slowly around the body in the anti-clockwise direction. After completing three pradakshina, the person should take a little bit of sesame seed and/or rice and place it in the mouth of the dead body. This is a symbolic act. The mouth of the deceased person remains closed. The rice/til placed in the mouth area spills over. This is acceptable.



Note: The *Kartaa* and his brothers alone should gently tap their right thigh with their right hand while walking around the body. Tapping of the right thigh should be done during all the three times of walking around the body

Ahutis (pouring of ghee into Agni)

Stand on the east side of the body, facing west, chant the following mantra and place the homa kundam (with fire) on the chest of the body.

मैनं - मग्ने विदहो माऽभिशोचो माऽस्यत्वंच चिक्षिपो मा शरीरम् ।
यदा श्रुतं करवो जातवेदोऽथेमेनं प्रहिणुतात् पितृभ्यः ॥
श्रुतं यदा करसि जातवेदोऽथेमेनं परिदत्तात् पितृभ्यः ।
यदागच्छात्यसुनीतिमेतामथा देवानां वशनीर्भवाति ॥

maina - magne vidaho maaBishocho maasyatvaMcha
chikShipo maa shareeram | yadaa shrutam karavo
jaatavedothemenam prahiNutaat pitRuBya: ||
shrutam yadaa karasi jaatavedothemenam paridattaat pitRuBya: |
yadaagacChaatyasuneetimetaamathaa devaanaaM
vashaneerBavaati ||

Stand on the north side of the body, facing south and chant the following mantra.

सूर्यं ते चक्षुर्गच्छतु वातमात्मा द्यांच गच्छ पृथिवीं च धर्मणा ।
अपो वांगच्छ यदि तत्र ते हित-मोषधीषु प्रतिष्ठा शरीरैः ॥

sUryaM te chakShurgacChatu vaatamaatmaa dyaaMcha
gachCha pRuthiveem cha dharmaNaa |
apo vaagachCha yadi tatra te
hita-moShadheeShu pratiShThaa shareerai: ||

Stand on the west side of the body facing east. Take a spoonful of ghee from the ghee container and pour it into the fire on the homa kundam (placed on the chest of the body), after chanting each of the nine mantras (pour ghee after chanting *swahaa* part of the mantra indicated below)

य एतस्य पथो गोप्तारस्तेभ्यः स्वाहा । गोतृभ्योऽग्निभ्य इदम् ।

ya etasya patho goptaarasteBya: swaahaa | goptRuByogniBya idam |

य एतस्य पथो रक्षितारस्तेभ्यः स्वाहा । रक्षितृभ्योऽग्निभ्य इदम् ।

ya etasya patho rakShitaarasteBya: swaahaa |
rakShitRuByogniBya idam |

य एतस्य पथोऽभिरक्षितारस्तेभ्यस्वाहा । अभिरक्षितृभ्योऽग्निभ्य इदम् ।

ya etasya pathoBirakShitaarasteByaswaahaa |
aBirakShitRuByogniBya idam |

आख्यात्रे स्वाहा । आख्यात्रेऽग्नय इदम् ।

Akhyaatre swaahaa | Akhyaatregnaya idam |

अपाख्यात्रे स्वाहा । अपाख्यात्रेऽग्नय इदम् ।

apaakhyaatre swaahaa | apaakhyaatregnaya idam |

अभिलालपते स्वाहा । अभिलालपतेऽग्नय इदम् ।

aBilaalapate swaahaa | aBilaalapategnaya idam |

अपलालपते स्वाहा । अपलालपते अग्नय इदम् ।

apalaalapate swaahaa| apalaalapate agnaya idam |

अग्नये कर्मकृते स्वाहा । कर्मकृतेऽग्नय इदम् ।

agnaye karmakrute swaahaa | karmakrutegnaya idam |

यमत्र नाधीमस्तस्मै स्वाहा । अनधीयमानाया अग्नय इदम् ।

yamatra naadheemastasmai swaahaa |
anadheeyamaanaayaa agnaya idam |

Chanting of Nine Mantras

Locate a position to the west of the body and sit facing east. Looking towards the fire, silently chant the following nine mantras.

प्रकेतुना बृहता भात्यग्निराविर्विश्वानि वृषभो रोरवीति ।
दिवश्चिदन्तादुपमामुदान डपामुपस्थे महिषो सवर्धो – ॐ – ॐ – ॐ
मिदं त एकं पर ऊत एकं तृतीयेन ज्योतिषा संविशस्व ॥

praketunaa bRuhataa Baatyagniraavirvishvaani vRuShaBO roraveeti | divashchidantaadupamaamudaana Dapaamupasthe mahiSho savardhO - oum - oum - oum - midaM ta ekaM para uta ekaM tRuteeyEna jyotiShaa saMvishasva ||

संवेशनस्तनुवै चारुरेधि प्रियो देवानां परमे सदस्थो
– ॐ – ॐ – ॐ – न्नाके सुपर्ण -
मुपयत्पतन्तं हृदा वेनन्तो अभ्यचक्षत त्वा ॥

saMvEshanastanuvai chaarurEdhi priyO devaanaaM parame sadasthO - oum - oum - oum - nnaake suparNa-mupayatpatantaM hRudaa venantO aByachakShata tvaa ||

हिरण्यपक्षं वरुणस्य दूत यमस्य योनौ शकुनं भुरण्यौ
– ॐ – ॐ – ॐ - मतिद्रवसारमेयौ
श्वानौ चतुरक्षौ शबलौ साधुना पथा ॥

hiraNYapakShaM varuNasya doota yamasya yOnau shakunaM BuraNYau - oum - oum - oum - matidravasaarameyau shvaanau chaturakShau shabalau saadhunaa pathaa ||

अथा पितृन् सुवित्राम् अपीहि यमेन ये सधमादम्मदन्तो – ॐ – ॐ – ॐ
यौ ते श्वानौ यमरक्षितारौ चतुरक्षौ पथिरक्षीनृचक्षसा ॥

athaa pitRun suvidatraaM apeehi yamena ye sadhamaadammadantO
- oum - oum - oum - yau te shvaanau yamarakShitaarau chaturakShau pathirakSheenRuchakShasaa ||

ताभ्यां राजन् परिदेहयेनं स्वस्तिच स्मा अनमीवं च धेहो – ॐ – ॐ – ॐ
मुरुणसावसुतृपा वुलुंबलौ यमस्य दूतौ चरतो वशाम् अनु ॥

taaByaaM raajan paridehyenaM svasticha smaa anameevaM
chadhehO - oum - oum - oum - muruNasaavasutRupaa
vuluMbalau yamasya dootau charatO vashaaM anu ||

तावस्मभ्यं दृशये सूर्याय पुनर्दत्ता वसुंमद्येह भद्रो – ॐ – ॐ – ॐ
म् सोम एकेभ्यः पवते घृतमेक उपासते ॥

taavasmabhyaM ddRushaye sooryaaya punardattaa
vasuMmadyeha bhadrO - oum - oum - oum - m soma
ekebhyaH pavatE ghRutameka upaasatE ||

येभ्यो मधुः प्रधावति तांश्चिदेवापि गच्छतो – ॐ – ॐ – ॐ
म् ये युध्यन्ते प्रधनेषु शूरासो ये तनुत्यजः ॥

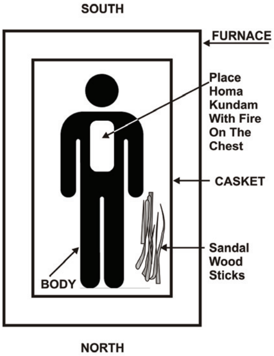
yebhyo madhuH pradhaavati taaMSchidevaapi gacCh
- oum - oum - oum - m yE yudhyantE pradhanEShu
shUraasO yE tanutyajaH ||

ये वा सहस्रदक्षिणास्तांश्चिदेवापि गच्छन्तो – ॐ – ॐ – ॐ
म् तपसा ये अनाधृष्यास्तपसा ये सुवर्गताः ॥

ye vaa sahasradakShiNaastaa MSchid Evaapi gacCantO
oum - oum - oum - m tapasaa ye
anaadhRuShyaastapasaa ye suvargataaH ||

तपो ये चक्रिरे महत्तांश्चिदेवापि गच्छतोम् ॥

tapo yE chakrirE mahattaaMSchidEvaapi gachCatOm ||



Placing the Body in the Furnace

Take a few kusha grass and tulsi leaves and dip them in water from the small kalash and do prokshan (sprinkling) of the electric furnace area if possible. This is for spiritual purification of the place where the body is being cremated.

The body should now be carefully moved to the furnace area. Place the sandal stick(s)

on the body. The body should be placed with the head on the southern part of the furnace bed if possible. Place the homa kundam in which Ahutis were made, on the chest of the body.

The *Kartaa* should turn the electric furnace on to start the cremation process.

Prayer to Surya Devata

Take a little bit of water and sprinkle on both palms and chant the following mantra, to worship surya devata.

उद्वयं तमसस्परि पश्यन्तो ज्योतिरुत्तरं ।
देवं देवत्रा सूर्यमगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमम् ॥
udvayaM tamasaspari pashyanto jyotiruttaraM |
devaM devatraa sooryamaganma jyotiruttamam ||

ProkshanA (Sprinkling of water)

The *Kartaa* followed by all the others should quietly leave the cremation area without looking back at the cremation pyre. Then the *Kartaa* should sprinkle water on the head of all relatives and himself. Chant the following mantra while sprinkling of water.

धाता पुनातु सविता पुनातु । अग्नेस्तेजसा सूर्यस्य वर्चसा ॥
dhaataa punaatu savitaa punaatu | agnestejasaa sooryasya varchasaa||

Dakshina to the Priest (payment in cash and/or kind for services rendered)

Take a small plate and keep the dakshinaa money along with some coins, sprinkle little water symbolically on the coins.

Chant the following mantra:

अशेषे हे परिषत् भवत्पादमूले मया समर्पिताम् इमां सौवर्णीं दक्षिणां यत्किंचित् दक्षिणां यथोक्त दक्षिणामिव ताम्बूलं च स्वकृत्य

asheShe he pariShat bhavatpaadamUle mayaa samarpitaam imaam souvarNeem dakShiNaam yatkinchit dakShiNaam yathokta dakShiNaamiva taambUlaM cha sweekrutya

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.
Cremation of father, performed by the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य मम पितुः मरणकाले दहनकाले च तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं मया अमुकाग्निनाकृतं पैतृमेधिकं कर्म यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya mama pitu: maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa amukaagninaakrutam paitRumedhikam karma yathaashaastrabhuyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

Cremation of a male person, performed by other than the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य यजमानस्य मरणकाले दहनकाले च तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं मया अमुकाग्निनाकृतं पैतृमेधिकं कर्म यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya yajamaanasya maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa amukaagninaakrutam paitRumedhikam karma yathaashaastrabhUyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

Cremation of mother, performed by the son:

.......गोत्राया.......नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः मम मातुः मरणकाले दहनकाले च
तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि
तद्दोष परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं
मया अमुकाग्निनाकृतं पैतृमेधिकं कर्म
यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

.......gotraayaa:......... naamnyaa: pretaayaa: mama maatu: maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa amukaagninaakrutam paitRumedhikaM karma yathaashaastrabhUyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

Cremation of a female person, performed by other than the son:

.......गोत्राया.......नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः यजमान्याः मरणकाले दहनकाले च
तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि
तद्दोष परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं
मया अमुकाग्निनाकृतं पैतृमेधिकं कर्म
यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

.......gotraayaa:......... naamnyaa: pretaayaa: yajamaanyaa: maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa amukaagninaakrutam paitRumedhikaM karma yathaashaastrabhuyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

Offer Dakshina (offering for performing cremation ceremony) to the priest.
The Priest should say: तथाऽस्तु । tathaastu |

Shaving and Snana

It is customary for the sons to do partial (face and/or head) or complete shave (shaving of all hair of the body) outside of home. If the *Kartaa*

is not the son of the deceased, a partial shave of the face area is considered appropriate.

After going home, a full shower (head, body) should be taken by all the members of the family.

After shower, it is customary to step on a stone seeking strength from Ishwara by reciting the following prayer:

अश्मानिव स्थिरो भूयासम् ।

Ashmaniva Sthiro Bhuyasam |

May I remain firm and unshaken as this stone.

Most families light a lamp and keep this lit (uninterrupted) throughout the 13 days. The families perform purification ceremony (called punyahavachanam) on the 13th day prior to puja or Havan. The traditions vary widely; seek guidance from elders who can provide that advice.

8 DAY 2 - SANCHAYANA (Collection of Ashes)

The crematoriums offer the ashes generally the day following cremation. The ashes are provided in a container. The container should be carefully carried and safely stored at a location outside of home (such as a garage). **The container should not be taken inside home, including puja room. The container should not be taken to any temple.** Since the ashes are remains of the deceased body and are considered to have inherent impurities, the container of ashes is not kept in the vicinity of sacred murthys or images of Bhagwan either at home or temples.

Immersion of ashes in India

Some families prefer to take the ashes to India, to immerse in the Holy Ganga at pilgrimage centers such as Hardwar. Such families shall take the ashes to India and seek the guidance of priests in India for proper immersion procedures. A Department of Homeland Security approved document issued by the cremation center may be required to take the Asti to India. Please refer to information at the end of this section, for documents needed from Indian Embassy / Consulate for immersion of ashes India.

It is recommended that the immersion of ashes should be performed before the 10^{th} day after death. Immersion should be performed preferably by the Kartaa (the person, who performed cremation). If this is not possible, a close relative or friend should perform this ritual.

Immersion of ashes in the USA

If immersion of ashes in the holy rivers of India is not possible, it is perfectly alright to perform the immersion at any ocean or river closest to the place one lives. According to our scriptures, water from all the sources is considered sacred, no matter where we live. It is preferred to immerse the ashes in a flowing river or ocean and not in a lake. Please check with local authorities on regulations, if any, on immersion.

Immersion Procedure

Transfer the ashes to an earthenware or copper vessel (*Kalash*). Pour milk and Ganga Jal into the vessel (*Kalash*). The entire container along with the contents should be immersed in the river or sea. The immersion should be performed prior to noon time if possible. Immersion should be performed on day 2, 3, 5, 7 or 9 following death. Immersion should not be performed on Friday.

While immersing, chant the name "Naarayana…. Naarayana…. Naarayana" or as per the tradition of the family.

After immersion of Asti, a shower should be taken by the person(s) who performed immersion.

8.1 Sanchayana Samskar

Most families observe the following rituals and Havan prior to the immersion of ashes.

Materials Needed

- Copper or preferably earthenware *Kalash* (The *Kalash* will be immersed in water and will not be retrieved)
- Ganga Jal
- Milk
- An aluminum tray a minimum of 10" long x 6" wide filled with sand.
- A Havan kundam or one made of aluminum tray and foil
- A cup of Ghee
- Sandalwood paste (little)
- A metal cup and spoons
- A kalash to hold water
- Small white cloth to cover the Asti *Kalash*
- Kusha (darba grass) about 5
- Fruits and other naivedya for offering as per family tradition

Sankalpa (stating of purpose of the ritual)

After wearing traditional attire and sitting on the floor facing east, carefully transfer the ashes completely from the box provided by the crematorium into the *Kalash*. Fill sand in an aluminum tray and place the tray on the floor, with the longer side of the tray in the North-South direction. Place the *Kalash* on the sand.

Chant the following mantra (insert appropriate name of year, ayana, ruthu, month, paksh and tithi and day in the sankalpa)

श्रीगोविन्द गोविन्द गोविन्द अद्य श्रीभगवतः महापुरुषस्य
विष्णोः आज्ञया प्रवर्तमानस्य आद्यब्रह्मणः
द्वितीयपरार्धे श्वेतवराहकल्पे वैवस्वत मन्वन्तरे
अष्टाविंशतितमे कलियुगे प्रथमेपादे क्रौञ्चद्वीपे
ऐन्द्रखण्डे उत्तर अमेरिक्कादेशे अस्मिन् वर्तमाने व्यावहारिके
प्रभवादीनां षष्ट्याः संवत्सराणां मध्ये.... नाम
संवत्सरे.... अयने..... ऋतौ.... मासे.... पक्षे...... तिथौ........
वासरयुक्तायां विष्णुयोग विष्णुकरण
एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायाम् अस्यां पुण्यतिथौ

shrIgovinda govinda govinda adya srIbhagavata:
mahaapuruShasya viShNo: aaj~jayaa pravartamaanasya
aadyabrahmaNa: dvitIyaparaardhe shvetavaraahakalpe vaivasvata
manvantare aShTaavimshatitame kaliyuge prathamepaade
krounchadwIpe aindrakhaNDe uttara amerikkaadeshe asmin
vartamaane vyaavahaarike prabhavaadInaam ShaShTyaa:
samvatsaraaNaam madhye .... naama samvatsare .... ayane.....
Rutou...maase.... pakShe...... tithou...... vaasarayuktaayaam
viShNuyoga viShNukaraNa
evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam asyaam PuNyatithau

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

For deceased father, rituals performed by the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः मम पितुः प्रेतस्य
अद्य द्वितीयेऽहनि अस्थि संचयनं करिष्ये ।

......gotrasya......naamna: mama pitu: pretasya
adya dvitIyehani asthi saMchayanaM kariShye |

For deceased male person, rituals performed by other than the son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः यजमानस्य प्रेतस्य
अद्य द्वितीयेऽहनि अस्थि संचयनं करिष्ये ।
......gotrasya.....naamna: yajamaanasya pretasya
adya dvitIyehani asthi saMchayanaM kariShye |

For deceased mother, rituals performed by the son:

.......गोत्रायाः....... नाम्न्याः मम मातुः प्रेतायाः
अद्य द्वितीयेऽहनि अस्थि संचयनं करिष्ये ।
......gotraayaa:......naamnyaa: mama maatu: pretaayaa:
adya dvitIyehani asthi saMchayanaM kariShye |

For deceased female person, rituals performed by other than the son:

.......गोत्रायाः....... नाम्न्याः यजमान्याः प्रेतायाः
अद्य द्वितीयेऽहनिअस्थि संचयनं करिष्ये ।
......gotraayaa:.......naamnyaa: yajamaanyaa: pretaayaa:
adya dvitIyehani asthi saMchayanaM kariShye |

Hiranyadanam for Astisanchayanam

Take a few coins and place them on a plate and sprinkle some water. Chant the following mantra.

अस्थि संचयनकाले तिथिवार नक्षत्र लग्न योग करणादिभिः यो दोषः
समजनि तद्दोषपरिहारार्थं प्राजापत्य कृच्छ्र प्रत्याम्नाय हिरणयं सम्प्रददे ॥
Asti saMchayanakaale tithivaara nakShatra lagna yoga karaNaadibhi:
yo doSha: samajani taddoShaparihaaraartham praajaapatya
kRucchra pratyaamnaaya hiraNyam sampradade ||

Offer these coins to the Priest.

Prokshana (sprinkling) of milk and Ganga jal
Take a cup. Pour milk and Ganga jal into the cup. Facing southern direction, take a spoon and sprinkle this mixture of Gangal jal and Milk on the ashes contained inside the *Kalash*. Sprinkling should be done five times, each at the end of chanting of the mantras provided below.

यत्ते अग्नि – ममन्था – मवृषथा येवपक्तवे ।
इमम् तग् शमयामसि क्षीरेण चोदकेन च ॥
yatte agni - mamanthaa - mavRUShathaa yevapaktave |
imam tagM shamayaamasi kSheereNa chodakena cha ||

यं त्वमग्ने समदहास्त्वर्मुनिर्वापया पुनः ।
क्यांबूरत्र जायतां पाकदूर्वा व्यल्कशा ॥
yaM tvamagne samadahaastvarmunirvaapayaa puna: |
kyaaMbUratra jaayataaM paakadoorvaa vyalkashaa ||

शीतिके शातिकावति ह्लादुके ह्लादुकावति ।
मण्डूक्यांसु संगमयेमगं स्वग्निगंशमयं ॥
sheetike shaatikaavati hlaaduke hlaadukaavati |
maNDUkyaasu saMgamayemagM svagnigMshamaya ||

शंते धन्वन्या आपश्शमुते सन्त्वनूयाः ।
शंते समुद्रिया आपश्शमुते सन्तुवर्ष्याः ॥
shaMte dhanvanyaa aapashshamute santvanUkyaa: |
shaMte samudriyaa aapashshamute santuvarShyaa: ||

शंते श्रवन्ती स्तनुवे शमु ते सन्तु कूप्याः ।
शंते नीहारो वर्षतु शमु पृष्वाऽवशीयताम् ॥
shaMte sravantI stanuve shamu te santu kUpyaa: |
shaMte neehaaro varShatu shamu pRUShvaavasheeyataam ||

Sanchayana Havan

Place a few pieces of cow dung patties, coconut kernel inside the homa kund and light with camphor to create fire to perform Havan. Take spoonful of ghee from the cup and pour into the fire at end of each of the four mantras provided below.

अवसृज पुनरग्ने पितृभ्यो यस्त आहुतश्चरति स्वधाभिः ।
आयुर्वसान उपयातु शेषगं संगच्छतां तनुवा जातवेदः स्वाहा ।
अग्नये जातवेदस इदम् ॥

avasRUja punaragne pitRUByo yasta aahutashcharati svadhaaBi: |
aayurvasaana upayaatu sheShagM saMgacChataaM tanuvaa
jaataveda: svaahaa | agnaye jaatavedasa idam ||

संगच्छस्व पितृभिः सगं स्वधाभिः समिष्टापूर्तेन परमे व्योमन् ।
यत्र भूम्यै वृणसे तत्र गच्छ तत्र त्वा देवस्सविता दधातु स्वाहा ।
देवाय सवित्र इदम् ॥

saMgacChasva pitRUBi: sagM svadhaaBi:
samiShTaapoortena parame vyoman |
yatra Boomyai vRUNase tatra gacCha tatra tvaa
devassavitaa dadhaatu svaahaa | devaaya savitra idam ||

यत्ते कृष्णश्शकुन आतुतोद पिपीलः सर्प उतवा श्वापदः ।
अग्निष्टद्विश्वा – दनृणं कृणोतु सोमश्च यो ब्राह्मणमाविवेश स्वाहा ॥
अग्नीषोमाभ्यामिदम् ।

yatte kRUShNashshakuna aatutoda pipeela: sarpa utavaa shvaapada: |
agniShTadvishvaa - danRUNaM kRUNotu somashcha yo
braahmaNamaavivesha svaahaa ||
agneeShomaaByaamidam |

मध्ये संभावित समस्तदोष प्रायश्चित्तार्थम्
ओम् भूर्भुवस्सुवः स्वाहा । प्रजापतय इदम् ॥

madhye saMBaavita samastadoSha praayaschittaartham
Om bhurbhuvassuva: svaahaa | prajaapataya idam ||

Naivedya (Offering)
Temporarily remove the *Kalash* containing ashes from the aluminum tray and place it on the floor. On the sand, using fingers of the right hand, create a symbolic picture of a human being, with the head facing the south and the feet facing north. Place the *Kalash* containing the ashes on the head side. Place the fruits and other naivedya (offerings) near the tray.

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

For deceased father, rituals performed by the son:

प्रेताय मम पित्रे श्मशानवासिभ्यो देवेभ्यश्च इमानि
पंचविधानि पण्यानि ददामि, लाजान् ददामि,
मुद्गान् ददामि, अपूपान् ददामि, शष्कुलीः
ददामि, नालिकेरोदकं ददामि सर्वाणि भक्ष्याणि ददामि ।
हे प्रेत मम पितः हे श्मशान-वासिनो
देवाश्च इमानि पण्यानि उपतिष्ठध्वम् ॥

pretaaya mama pitre shmashaanavaasiByo deveByashcha imaani
paMchavidhaani paNyaani dadaami, laajaan dadaami,
mudgaan dadaami, apoopaan dadaami, shaShkulee:
dadaami, naalikerodakaM dadaami sarvaaNi BakShyaaNi dadaami |
he preta mama pita: he shmashaana-vaasino
devaashcha imaani paNyaani upatiShThdhvam ||

For deceased male person, rituals performed by other than the son:

प्रेताय यजमानाय श्मशानवासिभ्यो देवेभ्यश्च इमानि
पंचविधानि पण्यानि ददामि, लाजान् ददामि,
मुद्गान् ददामि, अपूपान् ददामि, शष्कुलीः
ददामि, नालिकेरोदकं ददामि सर्वाणि भक्ष्याणि ददामि ।
हे प्रेत यजमान हे श्मशान-वासिनो
देवाश्च इमानि पण्यानि उपतिष्ठध्वम् ॥

pretaaya yajamaanaaya shmashaanavaasiByo deveByashcha
imaani paMchavidhaani paNyaani dadaami, laajaan dadaami,
mudgaan dadaami, apoopaan dadaami, shaShkulee: dadaami,
naalikerodakaM dadaami sarvaaNi BakShyaaNi dadaami |
he preta yajamaana he shmashaana-vaasino
devaashcha imaani paNyaani upatiShThdhvam ||

For deceased mother, rituals performed by the son:

प्रेताय मम मात्रे श्मशानवासिभ्यो
देवेभ्यश्च इमानि पंचविधानि पण्यानि ददामि,
लाजान् ददामि, मुद्गान् ददामि, अपूपान् ददामि, शष्कुलीः
ददामि, नालिकेरोदकं ददामि सर्वाणि भक्ष्याणि ददामि ।
हे प्रेत मम मातः हे श्मशान-वासिन्याः
देवाश्च इमानि पण्यानि उपतिष्ठध्वम् ॥

pretaaya mama maatre shmashaanavaasiByo
deveByashcha imaani paMchavidhaani paNyaani dadaami,
laajaan dadaami, mudgaan dadaami, apoopaan dadaami, shaShkulee:
dadaami, naalikerodakaM dadaami sarvaaNi BakShyaaNi dadaami |
he preta mama maata: he shmashaana-vaasinyaa:
devaashcha imaani paNyaani upatiShThdhvam ||

For deceased female person, rituals performed by other than the son:

प्रेताय यजमान्यै श्मशानवासिभ्यो देवेभ्यश्च इमानि
पंचविधानि पण्यानि ददामि, लाजान् ददामि,
मुद्गान् ददामि, अपूपान् ददामि, शष्कुलीः
ददामि, नालिकेरोदकं ददामि सर्वाणि भक्ष्याणि ददामि ।
हे प्रेत यजमानि हे श्मशान-वासिन्याः
देवाश्च इमानि पण्यानि उपतिष्ठध्वम् ॥

pretaaya yajamaanyai shmashaanavaasiByo deveByashcha imaani panchavidhaani paNyaani dadaami, laajaan dadaami, mudgaan dadaami, apoopaan dadaami, shaShkulee: dadaami, naalikerodakaM dadaami sarvaaNi BakShyaaNi dadaami |
he preta yajamaani he shmashaana-vaasinyaa:
devaashcha imaani paNyaani upatiShThdhvam ||

Sankalpa (for immersion into River or Ocean)

Close the Asti *Kalash* tightly with a small white cloth and chant the mantra below.
Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

For deceased father, rituals performed by the son:

अद्य पूर्वोक्त एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां पुण्यतिथौ..... गोत्रस्य...... नाम्नः मम पितुः अद्य द्वितीयेऽहनि महानद्यां (समुद्रे) अस्थिस्थापनं करिष्ये ।

adya pUrvokta evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam puNyatithou..... gotrasya......naamna: mama pitu: adya dvitIyehani mahaanadyaam (samudre) asthisthaapanaM kariShye |

For other deceased male person, rituals performed by other than the son:

अद्य पूर्वोक्त एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां पुण्यतिथौ..... गोत्रस्य...... नाम्नः यजमानस्य अद्य द्वितीयेऽहनि महानद्यां (समुद्रे) अस्थिस्थापनं करिष्ये ।

adya pUrvokta evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam puNyatithou..... gotrasya......naamna: yajamaanasya adya dvitIyehani mahaanadyaam (samudre) asthisthaapanaM kariShye |

For deceased mother, rituals performed by the son:

अद्य पूर्वोक्त एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां
पुण्यतिथौ..... गोत्राया...... नाम्न्याः मम मातुः अद्य
द्वितीयेऽहनि महानद्यां (समुद्रे) अस्थिस्थनं करिष्ये ।

adya pUrvokta evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam
puNyatithou..... gotraayaa: ......naamnyaa: mama maatu:
adya dvitIyehani mahaanadyaam (samudre) asthisthaapanam
kariShye |

For other deceased female person, rituals performed by other than the son:

अद्य पूर्वोक्त एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां
पुण्यतिथौ..... गोत्राया...... नाम्न्याः यजमान्याः अद्य
द्वितीयेऽहानि महानद्यां (समुद्रे) अस्थिस्थापनं करिष्ये ।

adya pUrvokta evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam
puNyatithou..... gotraayaa: ......naamnyaa: yajamaanyaa: adya
dvitIyehani mahaanadyaam (samudre) asthisthaapanam kariShye |

Place kusha facing south on the floor. Place the Asti *Kalash* on the kusha. Take a spoonful of Ganga Jal and sprinkle on the kalash. Take a spoonful of ghee and sprinkle on the kalash. Take a little bit of sandal wood paste and sprinkle on the *Kalash*.

The Kalash is now ready for Asti immersion in a river or ocean. Immerse the *Kalash* with all the contents in flowing water, away from the bank of the river or away from the shore of the sea. While immersing, chant the name “Naarayana…. Naarayana…. Naarayana” or as per the family tradition.

After immersion of Asti, a shower should be taken by the person(s) who performed immersion.

Udaka Daana (Offering of water and water containing Til)

Following rituals are performed by some families after Sanchayanam (collection of ashes) on day 2. These rituals require the assistance of a qualified priest and are not outlined in this book. These rituals are typically performed away from home (such as a community center).

1. Teera kunda Paashana Stapana (Establishing three stones with kushaa, outside of home)
2. Aavaahana (Invoking the Preta Pitr on the stones)
3. Snaana (taking shower)
4. Vaasodaka, Tilodaka
5. Upastaana
6. Gruhya Kunda (kalash) Paashaana Sthatpana and Aavaahana of Preta Pitr
7. Vaasodaka and Tilodaka
8. Pinda bali
9. Ekottara vriddhi sraddha

8.2 Additional Information on Immersion of Ashes in India

For the families who choose to carry the ashes for immersion in India, following guidelines are provided.

The Indian Embassy/Consulates in the US require the applicant to fill in "the Miscellaneous Service Form" to obtain a No Objection Certificate to carry dead body/ashes to India.

In the event of death of a relative/ friend, if the applicant wishes to carry either body or ashes back home to India, the following documents are required to be submitted along with the "Miscellaneous Service Form"

a. Death Certificate in original with one photo copy

b. Burial / Cremation or embalming certificate in original with one copy;

c. A Certificate from a Medical Officer stating that" the deceased was not suffering from any contagious diseases" ;

d. Passport of the deceased [In case of US/Foreign national of Indian origin, only copy of US/Foreign Passport is required.]; and

e. Miscellaneous Service Form to be filled in requesting for the issue of a No Objection Certificate. The first three Certificates (a, b and c) will be attested, the Passport (d) cancelled and returned by the Embassy along with a No Objection Certificate. All these documents are to be carried by the person accompanying / carrying the body/ashes. Fee will depend upon the number of documents attested. The Miscellaneous Service Form should have the details of the deceased and signed by the person submitting the application along with copy of his passport.

For further information/questions, please contact the nearest Consulate or the Indian Embassy in Washington DC, Tel: (202) 939-9867 or at http://www.indianembassy.org.

19 DAY 3 TO DAY 9 UDAKA DAANA

The items 4, 8 and 9 identified under Udaka Daana of Section 8 are performed every morning, with increasing number of oblations every day from Day 3 to Day 9.

1. Vaasodaka and Tilodaka
2. Pinda bali
3. Ekottara vriddhi sraddha

Two pots, one containing water and second with milk are kept near the Paashanaa kunda (kalash). Some families also keep an open tender coconut. A lamp is also lit in the morning and evening near the kalash.

Some families combine all the Udaka Daana rituals (Section 8, Udaka Daana items 1 through 9) and perform them together starting on 5th or 9th day. These should be performed with the assistance of qualified priests in the community.

Haridwar



10 DAY 10 TO DAY 13 CEREMONIES

The observance of rituals from Day 10 to Day 13 varies according to the family traditions. Following paragraphs provide highlights of these rituals and provide a general guideline. The methods of observance of these rituals also vary widely. Please seek the guidance of priests to perform these rituals as desired. Since there is sufficient time to arrange for the observance of these rituals (unlike in the case of cremation), it is recommended that the priest be contacted as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements.

Day 10

1. Shaving, Snaana by close relatives (End of mourning)
2. Vaasodaka and Tilodaka
3. Ekottara Vriddhi Sraddha
4. Prabhuta Bali
5. Shanti Havan
6. Aaananda Havan

Day 11

1. Vrshot Sarjan
2. Maha Ekoddishta Sraddha
3. Avrttadya Masika
4. Donation to Cow sanctuary (Please see list of cow sanctuaries in this document) and Donation of other items to Temple and other charities

Day 12

1. Sapindi Karana
   This involves the following:
   Aavahana (invoking) of three generations of Pitrs starting from the deceased's father/mother, mother and Preta Pitr.
   Samyojana ritual, where the Pitr panda is merged with the three or six pitr pandas. With this ritual, the deceased has now obtained Pitr status from Preta status.

Day 13

1. Havans performed to pray to God signifying resumption of normal activities again. Wearing of traditional dress and resumption of wearing auspicious symbols, marks such as kumkum, Tilak, sandal paste, Bhasma etc.
2. Recalling the memory of the deceased by relatives and community after the Havan/Bhajan.

11 GODAAN OR DONATION TO COW SANCTUARY

Godaan refers to donation of a cow to a cow sanctuary or temple. It is customary to perform Godaan after the death of the person, on the twelfth day. According to our scriptures, offering of a cow facilitates easier passage of the deceased person into Pitr loka, crossing *VaitaraNi* River.

While most temples do not have facilities within their premises to protect cows in the USA, there are several cow sanctuaries throughout the United States offering protection to cows. In lieu of Godaan, money may be donated in memory of the person for the protection of the cows in the cow sanctuary. A list of a few of the cow sanctuaries in the USA is provided below.

It is also customary for families to donate money to cow sanctuaries every year on the death anniversary day. Protection of cow is considered a supreme yagya in our Hindu tradition.

Lakshmi Cow Sanctuary
1515 Ridge Rd
Bangor, PA 18013
Tel: 610-599-8824
www.cowprotection.com

Equal Vision Cow Sanctuary
PO Box 140
Angelica, NY 14709
Tel : 585-466-7457
www.equalvision.org

San Diego Purple Cow Sanctuary
PO Box 301775
Escondido, CA 92030
Tel: 760-749-4790
www.sandiegopurplecow.org

ISCKON Cow Sanctuary
New Vrindaban
Rd 1, Box #319
Moundsville, WV 26041
Tel: (304) 843-1600
www.newvrindaban.com

Helga Territer
PO Box 227
Shiloh, NJ 08353
Tel: 856-455-6637

Rameshwaram Temple



12 BURIAL/CREMATION OF BODY OF DECEASED CHILD

12.1 Death of Child, aged 24 months or below

If the age of the boy or girl child at the time of death is less than 2 years (24 months), then the body of the child should be buried in a nearby burial ground, during the day time. The body should not be cremated. The burial does not involve any rituals. The burial should be performed by the family in a simple manner as appropriate.

While the scriptures do not prescribe any rituals in the above case, the families may conduct puja/bhajan at home or temple at a suitable time, to pray to Ishvara to get mental and spiritual strength to bear the loss of the child.

12.2 Death of Child, aged above 24 months

12.2.1 Preparation for Cremation

Materials needed:

1. Garland
2. Traditional new clothes to decorate the body
3. Sandal wood stick(s)
4. Ghee (1 lb), a copper container for ghee with a metal/wood spoon. The ghee should be made into a liquid form immediately prior to the commencement of the rituals.
5. Long Kusha (quantity of about 10) (also called Darba, a type of grass stick used in Havan)
6. Container and spoon to dispense water (pancha pAtram)
7. A small kalash (container to hold water)
8. Ganga Jal
9. Match box
10. Cow dung patties if available (quantity of 4)
11. A small quantity of **rice husk** (1/4 lb)

12. Dry coconut kernel (quantity of six, break these into small pieces, no more than 2 inches long)
13. Camphor (1 packet)
14. Lamp with cotton wicks and ghee (oil) (one or two Lamps, as per family tradition)
15. Some families keep a picture of their Ishta Devataa and decorate with garland
16. Havan Kundam (Havan kundam should be made with a 6 inch diameter earthen plate wrapped in Aluminum foil, it should be small in size. This needs to be placed on the chest of the body during ceremony and will be with the body during cremation in the electric furnace).
17. A few rolls of paper towel for clean up.

Please refer to sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 for the following:
Washing the Body, Placing the Body in the Casket and Alankaram (Decoration) of the Body.

12.2.2 Cremation

Light the lamps and place near the picture of Ishta Devataa in a nearby area, away from the body.

The *Kartaa* should stand up and recite the mantras below. Insert the Gotra and name in the dotted space below.

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

Cremation performed by the father, for his son:

.......गोत्रं.....नाम्नं प्रेतं मम कुमारं तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना
संस्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिम् अनुगृहाण ॥

......gotram....... naamnam pretaM mama kumaaraM
tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskartuM
yogyataasiddhim anugruhaaNa ||

Cremation performed by other than the father, for a boy:

.......गोत्रं.....नाम्नं प्रेतं इमं कुमारं तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना संस्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिम् अनुगृहाण ॥

......gotram ...... naamnam pretaM imam kumaaraM tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskartuM yogyataasiddhim anugruhaaNa ||

Cremation performed by the father, for his daughter:

.......गोत्रां.....नाम्नीं मम कन्यां तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना संस्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिम् अनुगृहाण ॥

......gotraam ..... naamneem mama kanyaam tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskartuM yogyataasiddhim anugruhaaNa ||

Cremation performed by other than the father for a girl:

.......गोत्रां.....नाम्नीं इमां कन्यां तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना संस्कर्तुं योग्यतासिद्धिम् अनुगृहाण ॥

......gotraam ..... naamneem imaam kanyaam tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskartuM yogyataasiddhim anugruhaaNa ||

The priest should say **योग्यतासिद्धिरस्तु ।** yogyataasiddhirastu |

Cremation Havan

Place an aluminum tray filled with sand on the floor. Place the homa kundam on the sand. Place a few pieces of cow dung patties, **rice husk** and coconut kernel inside the homa kundam and light with camphor.

Take some water in a spoon and sprinkle around the homa kundam in anti- clockwise direction once.

Take some ghee from the container and pour into the homa kundam fire (called Ahuti) after silently chanting the mantra below.

प्रजापतय इदं न मम ॥

prajaapataya idam na mama |

Perform the above Ahuti a total of 12 times, each time chanting the mantra above.

Take some ghee from the container and pour into the homa kundam fire after chanting the mantra below. The Ahuti below should be performed a total of 12 times.

भूर्भुवस्सुवस्वाहा । प्रजापतय इदम् ॥

bhUrbhuvassuvaswaahaa | prajaapataya idam |

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only**.

Cremation performed by the father, for his son:

ओं भूः ...... गोत्रं ...... नाम्नं- प्रेतं मम कुमारं
तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना संस्करिष्यामि ॥

oM BU: ……….. gotram …………… naamnam ……….. pretam mama kumaaraM tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskariShyaami ||

Cremation performed by other than the father, for a boy:

ओं भूः ...... गोत्रं ...... नाम्नं- प्रेतं इमं कुमारं
तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना संस्करिष्यामि ॥

oM BU: ……… gotram ……. naamnam- pretam imam kumaaraM
tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskariShyaami ||

Cremation performed by the father, for his daughter:

ओं भूः ...... गोत्रां ...... नाम्नीं- प्रेतां मम कन्यां
तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना संस्करिष्यामि ॥

oM BU:……..gotraam ……. naamneem mama kanyaam pretam tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskariShyaami ||

Cremation performed by other than the father, for a girl:

ओं भूः ...... गोत्रां ...... नाम्नीं- प्रेतां इमां कन्यां
तुषाग्निना एकर्चविधिना संस्करिष्यामि ॥

oM BU:…….. gotraam ………..naamneem imaam kanyaam
pretam tuShaagninaa ekarchavidhinaa saMskariShyaami ||

Take some ghee and offer to the homakundam fire after chanting the following mantra once.

अस्मात् त्वमतिजातो अस्ययंत्वदभिजायताम् अग्नये
वैश्वानराय सुवर्गाय लोकाय स्वाहा ॥

asmaat tvamatijaato asyayaMtvadaBijaayataam
agnaye vaishvaanaraaya suvargaaya lokaaya svaahaa |

Take some water in a spoon and sprinkle around the homa kundam in anti -clockwise direction once.

The body should now be carefully moved to the furnace area. Place sandal wood stick(s) on the body. The body should be placed with the head on the southern part of the furnace surface if possible. Place the homa kundam in which Ahutis were made on the chest of the body.

The *Kartaa* should turn the furnace on to start the cremation process.

Please read below carefully and recite the appropriate mantra **only** and offer Dakshina to the priest.

Cremation performed by the father, for his son:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य मम कुमारस्य मरणकाले दहनकाले
च तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष
परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं मया
एकर्चविधिनाकृतं कर्म यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya mama kumArasya maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai: yo doSha:
samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa ekarchavidhinaakrutam karma yathaashaastrabhUyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

Cremation performed by other than the father, for a boy:

.......गोत्रस्य.......नाम्नः प्रेतस्य अस्य कुमारस्य मरणकाले दहनकाले च तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं मया एकर्चविधिनाकृतं कर्म यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

......gotrasya......... naamna: pretasya asya kumArasya maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa ekarchavidhinaakrutam karma yathaashaastrabhUyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

Cremation performed by the father, for his daughter:

.......गोत्रायाः.......नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः कुमार्याः मरणकाले दहनकाले च तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं मया एकर्चविधिनाकृतं कर्म यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

......gotraayaa: .... naamnyaa: pretaayaa: kumAryaa: maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa ekarchavidhinaakrutam karma yathaashaastrabhUyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

Cremation performed by other than the father, for a girl:

.......गोत्रायाः....... नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः अस्याः कुमार्याः
मरणकाले दहनकाले च तिथिवार नक्षत्र
योगकरणैः यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष परिहारार्थम्
अक्षय्य पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं मया एकर्चविधिनाकृतं
कर्म यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥

......gotraayaa:......... naamnyaa: pretaayaa: asyaa: kumAryaa:
maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra
yogakaraNai: yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham
akShayya puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa ekarchavidhinaakrutam
karma yathaashaastrabhUyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

The Priest should say: **तथाऽस्तु ।** tathaastu |

After cremation is complete and after going home, a full shower should be taken.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदचिनं नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

na jaayate mriyate vaa kadachin naayaM
bhUtvaa bhavitaa vaa na bhUya:|
ajo nitya: shaashvatoyaM puraaNo
na hanyate hanyamaane sharIre ||

It (the Self) is never born, nor does it ever die, nor, having once been, does it again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval, it is not slain when the body is slain.

Bhagavad Gita 2/20

13 CREMATION OF BODY OF WOMAN WHO WAS PREGNANT

If the pregnancy was past six months, and if the child is not alive, then the deceased child (removed from the mothers' womb, at a hospital) should be buried (not cremated) without any rites. The place of burial of the child should be close to the place of cremation of the mother, if possible.

Please refer to sections 3.4 for the materials needed for cremation and section 5 for the activities prior to cremation.

13.1 Cremation

Light the lamp(s) and place near the picture of Ishta Devvtaa in a nearby area, away from the body.

Sankalpa (stating of purpose of the ritual)

The Kartaa shall recite the following. After reciting each mantra below, take a spoon of water in your palm and drink the water.

अच्युताय नमः । अनन्ताय नमः । गोविन्दाय नमः ।

achyutaaya nama: | anantaaya nama: | govindaaya nama: |

Chant the following mantras:

केशव, नारायण, माधव, गोविन्द, विष्णो, मधुसूदन, त्रिविक्रम,
वामन, श्रीधर, हृषीकेश, पद्मनाभ, दामोदर ।

keshava, naaraayaNa, maadhava, govinda, viShNo, madhusUdana,
trivikrama, vaamana, srIdhara, hRuShIkesha,
padmanaabha,daamodara |

Chant the following mantras: (insert appropriate name of year, ayana, ruthu, month, paksh and tithi and day in the sankalpa)

श्रीगोविन्द गोविन्द गोविन्द अद्य श्रीभगवतः महापुरुषस्य विष्णोः आज्ञया प्रवर्तमानस्य आद्यब्रह्मणः द्वितीयपरार्धे श्वेतवराहकल्पे वैवस्वत मन्वन्तरे अष्टाविंशतितमे कलियुगे प्रथमेपादे क्रौञ्चद्वीपे ऐन्द्रखण्डे उत्तर अमेरिक्कादेशे अस्मिन् वर्तमाने व्यावहारिके प्रभवादीनां षष्ट्याः संवत्सराणां मध्ये.... नाम संवत्सरे.... अयने..... ऋतौ.... मासे.... पक्षे...... तिथौ........ वासरयुक्तायां विष्णुयोग विष्णुकरण एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायाम् अस्यां पुण्यतिथौ

shrIgovinda govinda govinda adya srIbhagavata: mahaapuruShasya viShNo: aajjayaa pravartamaanasya aadyabrahmaNa: dvitIyaparaardhe shvetavaraahakalpe vaivasvata manvantare aShTaavimshatitame kaliyuge prathamepaade krounchadwIpe aindrakhaNDe uttara amerikkaadeshe asmin vartamaane vyaavahaarike prabhavaadInaam ShaShTyaa: samvatsaraaNaam madhye .... naama samvatsare .... ayane..... Rutou...maase.... pakShe......tithou.......vaasarayuktaayaam viShNuyoga viShNukaraNa evaMguNa visheShaNa vishiShTaayaam asyaam puNyatithou

.......गोत्रां.....नाम्नीं गर्भिणीं प्रेताम् इमां गर्भिणी सम्स्कार पूर्वकं पैतृमेधिक विधिना सम्स्करिष्यामि ।

.......gotraam......... naamneem garbhiNIm pretaam imaam garBiNee samskaara poorvakam paitRumedhika vidhinaa samskariShyaami |

Place an aluminum tray filled with sand on the floor. Place the homa kundam on the sand. Place a few pieces of cow dung patties, coconut kernel inside the homa kundam and light with camphor.

Take some ghee from the container and pour into the homa kundam fire after chanting the mantra below. Pouring of the ghee should be after chanting of swahaa part of the mantra.

शतायुधाय शतवीर्याय शतोतयेऽभिमातिषाहे।

shataayudhaaya shataveeryaaya shatotayeBimaatiShaahe |

शतंयोनंश्शरदो अजीतानिन्द्रों नेषदति दुरितानि विश्वास्वाहा ॥ इन्द्रायेदम् ॥

shataMyonashsharado ajeetaanindro neShadati duritaani vishvaasvaahaa || indraayedam ||

ये चत्वारः पथयों देवयानां अन्तारा द्यावां पृथिवी वियन्तिं ।
तेषां यो अज्यांति मजीति-मावहात्तस्मै नो देवाः परिंदत्तेह सर्वे स्वाहां ।
देवेभ्य इदम् ॥

ye chatvaara: pathayo devayaanaa antaaraa dyaavaa pRUthivee viyanti| teShaaM yo ajyaati majeeti-maavahaattasmai no devaa: paridatteha sarve svaahaa | deveBya idam ||

ग्रीष्मो हेंमन्त उतनों वसन्तः शरद्वर्षास्सुंवितन्नों अस्तु ।
तेषांमृतूनां शतशांरदानान्निवात एंषामभये स्याम स्वाहां ॥
ग्रीष्मादिभ्य ऋतुभ्य इदं न मम ॥

greeShmo hemanta utano vasanta: sharadvaShaassuvitanno astu | teShaamRutoonaagM shaatashaaradaanaannivaata eShaamaBaye syaama svaahaa || greeShmaadiBya RUtuBya idam na mama ||

इदुवत्सरायं परिवत्सराय संवत्सरायं कृणुता बृहन्नमंः
तेषां वयं सुंमतौ यज्ञियांनां ज्योगजीता अंहताः स्यामस्वाहां ।
इदुवत्सरादिभ्य इदम् ॥

iduvatsaraaya parivatsaraaya saMvatsaraaya kRUNutaa bRUhannama:| teShaaM vayagM sumatau yajjiyaanaam jyogajeetaa ahataa: syaamasvaahaa | iduvatsaraadiBya idam ||

भद्रान्नः श्रेयस्समनैष्टदेवा स्त्वयां ऽवसेन समंशीमहित्वा ॥

Badraanna: shreyassamanaiShTadevaa stvayaa vasena samasheemahitvaa ||

सनों मयो भूः पितो आविंशस्व शंतोकायं तनुवें स्योनः स्वाहा ॥
देवेभ्यः सोमायेदम् ॥

sano mayo Bhu: pito aavishasva shaMtokaaya tanuve syona: svaahaa ||
devebhya: somaayedam ||

प्रयासाय स्वाहा । प्रयासायेदमित्यादि ॥
आयासायस्वाहा । वियासायस्वाहा ।

prayaasaaya svaahaa | prayaasaayedamityaadi ||
aayaasaayasvaahaa | viyaasaayasvaahaa |

संयासाय स्वाहा । उद्यासाय स्वाहा ।
अवयासाय स्वाहा । शुचे स्वाहा ।
शोकाय स्वाहा । तप्यत्त्वै स्वाहा ।
तपते स्वाहा । ब्रह्मसत्यायै स्वाहा । सर्वस्मै स्वाहा ।

saMyaasaaya svaahaa | udyaasaaya svaahaa |
avayaasaaya svaahaa | shuche svaahaa |
shokaaya svaahaa | tapyattvai svaahaa |
tapate svahaa | brahmasatyaayai svaahaa | sarvasmai svaahaa |

प्राणाय स्वाहा । व्यानाय स्वाहा । अपानाय स्वाहा ।
चक्षुषे स्वाहा । श्रोत्राय स्वाहा ।
मनसे स्वाहा । वाचे सरस्वत्यै स्वाहा ॥

praaNaaya svaahaa | vyaanaaya svaahaa | apaanaaya svaahaa |
chakShuShe svaahaa | shrotraaya svaahaa ||
manase svaahaa | vaache sarasvatyai svaahaa ||

पूष्णे स्वाहा । पूष्णे शरसे स्वाहा । पूष्णे प्रपथ्याय स्वाहा ॥

pooShNe svaahaa | pooShNe sharase svaahaa |
pooShNe prapathyaaya svaahaa ||

पूष्णे नरंधिषाय स्वाहा ।
पूष्णे अंघृणये स्वाहा । पूष्णे नरुणाय स्वाहा ॥
pooShNe naraMdhiShaaya svaahaa |
pooShNe aMGRUNaye svaahaa | pooShNe naruNaaya svaahaa ||

पूष्णे साकेताय स्वाहा ॥
pooShNe saaketaaya svaahaa ||

Place the homa kundam with fire on the chest of the body. The body should now be carefully moved to the furnace area. Place sandal wood stick(s) on the body. The body should be placed with the head on the southern part of the furnace surface if possible.

The *Kartaa* should turn the furnace on to start the cremation process.

The *Kartaa* followed by all others should quietly leave the cremation area.

The *Kartaa* should chant the following mantra and offer Dakshina to the priest.

.... गोत्रायाः..........नाम्न्याः प्रेतायाः अस्याः गर्भिण्याः
मरणकाले दहनकाले च तिथिवार नक्षत्र योगकरणैः
यो दोषः समजनि तद्दोष परिहारार्थम् अक्षय्य
पुण्यलोकावाप्त्यर्थं मया पैतृमेधिकविधिनाकृतं
कर्म यथाशास्त्रभूयात् इति भवान्तोऽनुगृह्णन्तु ॥
......gotraayayaa:......... naamnyaa: pretaayaa: asyaa: garbhiNyaa:
maraNakaale dahanakaale cha tithivaara nakShatra yogakaraNai:
yo doSha: samajani taddoSha parihaaraartham akShayya
puNyalokaavaaptyartham mayaa paitRumedhikavidhinaakrutam
karma yathaashaastrabhUyaat iti bhavaantonugruhNantu ||

The Priest should say: **तथाऽस्तु ।** tathaastu |

After cremation is complete and after going home, a full shower should be taken.

14 REFERENCES

1. Apastamba Apara Praoyogam by Sri. Anna, Surabhi Publications, India.
2. Jain Funeral Practices and Observances, Practical Guidelines for the Community, Dr. Tansukh J Salgia, Ohio.
3. Srujan se Visarjan tak – Sri. Anil Madhav Dave, India.
4. Antyeshti Sanskar – Swaminarayan Aksharpeeth, India.
5. Understanding Veda Karma Kanda (Path of Rituals) Vol I, Sri. G.K. Kannan, India.
6. Bereavement and Final Samskara in Hindu Tradition – Sri. Dhira Chaitanya

---

May we get in future births again and again the mind
for doing virtuous deeds, for acquiring strength,
for longevity, and contemplation of God for long.
Yajurveda 2/54

In Vedic tradition, important life events are marked by religious ceremonies called samskaras. The final samskara after death is antyeshti - final yagya (sacrifice), when the body itself is offered to the Agni (fire). This is the final purificatory rite for the gross body that reduces it to the five basic elements from which it was formed. It reduces the bonds between the subtle body and the gross body.

The antyeshti ceremonies address both the deceased and the bereaved family. The ceremonies are based on the Vedic vision of the individual and his relationship with Ishwara. The life of a Hindu is a spiritual one and his culture religious. For a person who lived a spiritual life dealing with death becomes an uplifting one. It makes it possible for one to cope with the difficult experience and come out of it as a more sensitive and mature individual.

The purpose of this book is to provide a procedure to cremate the body of the deceased person in accordance with Hindu tradition in the United States or at other places outside of Bharat. The procedures outlined below have been prepared based on references from authentic sources. The Hindu Antyeshti sanskar varies according to the practices of people from different regions of India. The methods vary between families from the same region of India and these have been followed for centuries based on the traditions handed down from generation to generation. However, the core rituals have always been based on procedures outlined in the Vedic sutras and apply to all, irrespective of geographical origin. While the traditional procedures are exhaustive, this document provides basic but essential steps to be performed.

"Samskar is a process which provides both happiness and liberation. I am sure that the generations of Hindus will be benefited by this book. My best wishes to the publication team."

- Pandit Suresh Chandra Joshi, Priest Hindu Jain Temple, Monroeville, PA

"This is a very informative and an excellent book for the young generation to follow Hindu culture as well as human values in this world. Every soul is a part of God and should be respected with proper rituals once the soul leaves the body. I strongly endorse this book."

- Dr. Sujatha Reddy MD, Hindu Temple of Atlanta

"I commend the publishers of this book for taking the pains in putting together this material in an organized, understandable and yet succinct way. Their service to present day Hindus in this regard is invaluable."

- Professor Balaji N. Hebbar Ph.D, D.D. Professor of Religion, George, Washington University

"This book beautifully fills a much needed gap in the lives of the Indian diaspora. A great care has been taken to consider many circumstances in which individuals in need can easily refer to this book to understand and perform the rituals in the most authentic way possible."

- Dr. Bal Ram Singh, Ph.D. Director, Center for Indic Studies, University of Massachusetts

"In simple language and with a practical focus, this book details all the cremation rites, with a transliteration in English of the most important mantras. With suggestions for how to prepare a dying person for the final hour, step by step instructions for a do-it-yourself cremation (if a priest is not available), and this book is a blessing and boon for all Sanatana Dharmis.

The HMEC organization and the authors of this book deserve kudos and appreciation from all American Hindus for distilling the essence of the final samkara for better appreciation and actual practice in this country."

- Dr. Kumar S. Nochur, President, Sri Lakshmi Temple, Ashland, MA

Our Santana Dharma teaches how to respect the body while conducting last rites. This book will serve as a reference and as a guide for us to perform our duties in accordance with Hindu tradition. We commend the authors for serving our community in presenting the entire process in a simple and yet thorough manner.

- Sant D. Gupta, President, Durga Temple of VA, Fairfax Station, VA

Published by

Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference,
An initiative of Vishwa Hindu Parishad
(World Hindu Council) of America Inc.

ISBN-13 : 978-0-9793501-2-2

51500

9 780979 350122